

2007 Annual Report

Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services

**Division of Children and Family Services
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services**

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

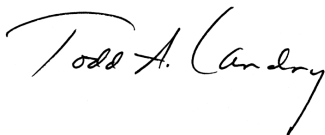
The Division of Children and Family Services had an eventful year. The Child Welfare Unit and the Office of Juvenile Services worked diligently to establish safety, permanency, and well-being for Nebraska's children and families. Our efforts are leading to improvement.

- For the first time in four years, the number of children in state care has declined. 2007 marks the second consecutive year in which the number of children safely exiting state care surpassed the number of children entering care.
- Nebraska continues to meet the federal goal in achieving permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time.
- For the first time, we are ranking within the national 75th percentile in the adoption of children in foster care for 17 months or longer.
- The number of finalized adoptions overall has increased 57.2% in the last four years, from 297 adoptions in 2003 to 467 adoptions in 2007.
- Additionally, we have resolved over half of the cases that have fit within the priority populations identified in Governor Heineman's Child Welfare Initiatives since their launching in June 2006.

In November 2007, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services began preparing for their second federal Child and Family Services Review. Over 100 community partners and stakeholders gathered to conduct a collaborative statewide assessment of child welfare and juvenile services throughout the state. We look forward to the upcoming onsite review to present additional insight into the ways in which we can improve the services we provide to Nebraska children and families.

Without a doubt, our work is far from complete. The following year will present additional challenges and opportunities for change. We will continue to monitor our performance on the federal outcomes pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, and identify ways in which we can improve. With the recent implementation of the new Nebraska Safety Intervention System, we plan to reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care and provide safety services to allow more children to remain safely in their home. We will develop, improve, and expand services throughout the state to offer a more comprehensive, balanced array of services. Last, we will carry out these efforts in collaboration with our community partners and with complete accountability to the public we serve.

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services have made great progress in establishing safety, permanency, and well-being for Nebraska's children and families in the last year. We are committed to continuing this momentum of change and improvement as we help people live better lives.



Todd A. Landry, Director
Division of Children and Family Services

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services are committed to improving our work with children and families, and to evaluating the level at which we are currently performing in order to make such improvements. In July 2004, the Department of Health and Human Services established performance evaluation measures related to the safety of, and permanency for, the children served by the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services. In recent years, we have been monitoring our performance according to these state-established goals, in addition to national goals established by the federal government.

Not only do we recognize the importance of monitoring our performance in the work we do with children and families, but we believe that reporting the findings to key stakeholders and the community at large is critical to maintaining public and legislative accountability. For that reason, we began writing and distributing annual reports documenting our performance in 2005.

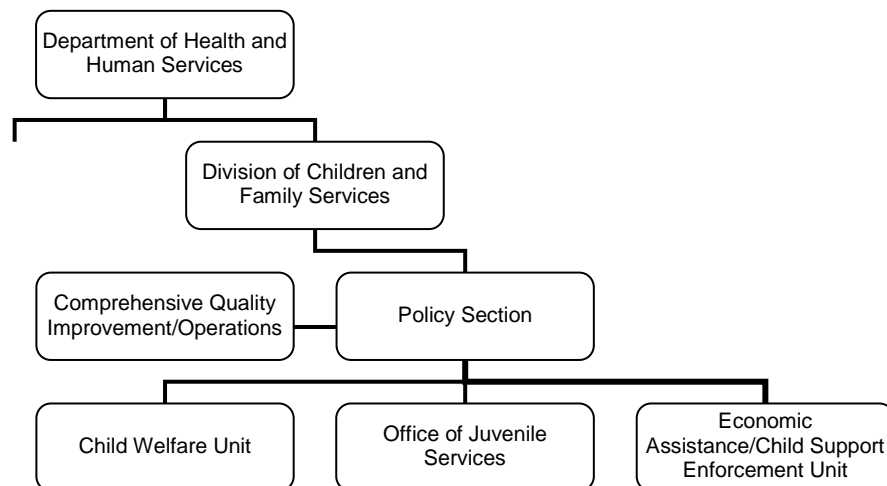
The data in this report reflect the calendar year beginning January 1, 2007 and ending December 31, 2007, unless otherwise specified. The data are from the Department of Health and Human Services' Nebraska Family Online Client User System (N-FOCUS), unless otherwise specified. N-FOCUS collects and reports federally mandated data via the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System and voluntary data via the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. N-FOCUS also collects other information useful to workers, supervisors, and administrative staff who are responsible for decision making and quality assurance efforts, and reports this data via electronic communications. N-FOCUS is a fully automated source of information regarding referrals, case-related activities, contracts and licensing actions, and other case-specific data.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In July 2007, the former Nebraska Health and Human Services System experienced a significant change. The three separate state agencies that comprised the system – Health and Human Services; Finance and Support; and Regulation and Licensure – were combined to form one new Department of Health and Human Services. This restructuring merged the former Office of Protection and Safety and the Office of Economic and Family Support into one Division of Children and Family Services. This merger allows the Division to provide more accessible, effective, and efficient services to Nebraska's children and families. The Child Welfare Unit and the Office of Juvenile Services (formerly within the Office of Protection and Safety and now residing within the Division of Children and Family Services) continue to work towards establishing safety, permanency, and well-being for the children and families we serve.

1. *Partial Organizational Structure Chart (Please see page 45 of this report for complete organizational structure.)*



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

On any given day, staff within the Child Welfare Unit and the Office of Juvenile Services work with approximately 7,000 children and their families. Because of this public trust this work entails and our commitment to these children, our paramount concern is their safety, permanency, and well-being. For that reason, we have crafted the priority outcomes of our work around these factors.

Priority Outcomes:

- Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect, and safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations and the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families.
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational, physical, and mental health needs.

INTRODUCTION

PHILOSOPHY

To achieve these outcomes with the children and families we serve, we apply a philosophy of Family-Centered Practice to our work. Family-Centered Practice is a family-driven, community-oriented, strength-based, highly individualized planning and problem solving process. Caseworkers, children, parents, family, and other informal and formal supports work together as one team to develop case plans that reflect each family's unique strengths and values, and that address each person's individual needs. The team identifies the services and supports families need to achieve their goals,



brainstorms solutions cooperatively and with the input of the families, and makes decisions collectively as a team. Throughout this collaborative decision making and planning process, those involved remain focused on the primary goal of their efforts: to establish and maintain child safety.

COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Division of Children and Family Services is committed to improving the work we do with children and families, and to evaluating the level at which we are currently performing in order to make such improvements. The Division's Comprehensive Quality Improvement/Operations area is responsible for monitoring the quality of care children and families receive from the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services. Quality assurance activities include formal reviews of child abuse and neglect intake reports, initial assessments, out-of-home assessments, background checks, and home studies. Comprehensive Quality Improvement/Operations staff conduct ongoing case file reviews to monitor daily casework practice. The staff also conduct surveys with caregivers, foster parents, and youth who exit Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers to gain their unique perspective on, and satisfaction with, services.

There have been significant changes or additions to our quality assurance activities in recent years. In 2006, the Department of Health and Human Services hired a program specialist to conduct ongoing review of cases involving Native American or Alaska Native children and to monitor our compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). ICWA is a federal law passed in 1978 that seeks to keep Native American children with Native American families. Over the last year, our ICWA specialist has worked with Nebraska Tribes to develop their own quality assurance processes as well.

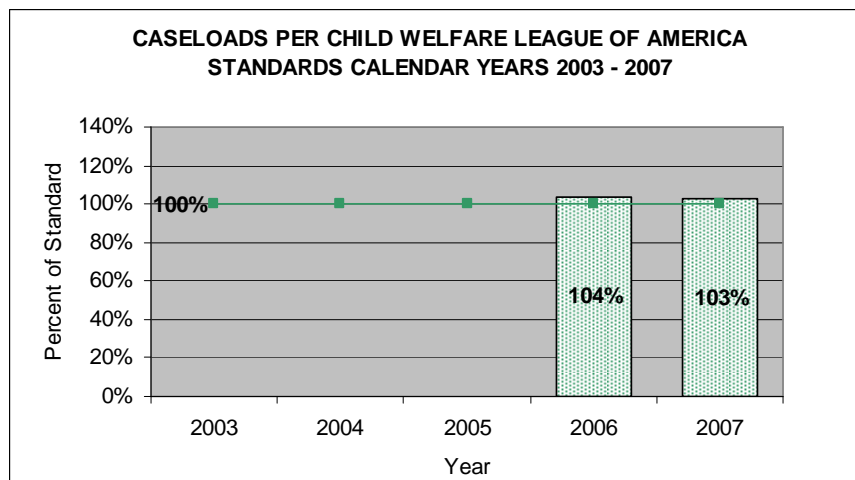
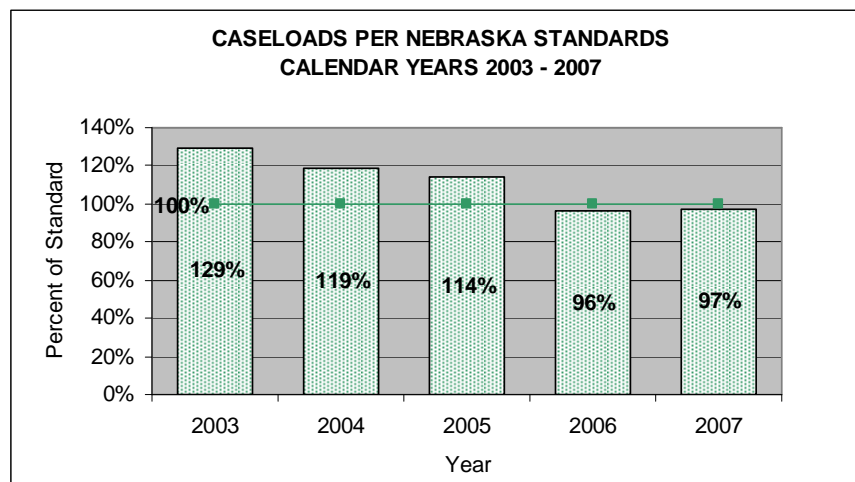
In 2007, the Comprehensive Quality Assurance/Operations staff began a tiered review of cases that involved our new safety intervention system to monitor adherence to the model. Comprehensive Quality Assurance/Operations staff also spent a considerable amount of time and energy in preparing for the state's second federal Child and Family Services Review, scheduled for July 2008. We completed our first federal review in 2002 and have conducted our own version of the review, which mirrors that of the federal review, in 2005 and 2006. This report provides more detailed descriptions of our new safety intervention system and the federal Child and Family Services Review in the *Major Accomplishments in 2007* section on page 33.

INTRODUCTION

CASELOADS

In 1992, in a joint effort with the Department of Public Administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the State of Nebraska developed standards for the number of children and families each caseworker can adequately serve. The State shaped these standards around national standards established by the Child Welfare League of America that same year and then later revised in 2003.

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services monitor caseloads by comparing current caseload levels to state and national recommendations or standards. The desired goal is to fall at or within (100% or below) recommended caseload levels. Caseload sizes have generally decreased since 2003, falling just within recommended levels in the last two years. Currently, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services staff is operating at 97% of state recommendations.



Notes. Data from Calendar Years 2003 through 2005 are unavailable.

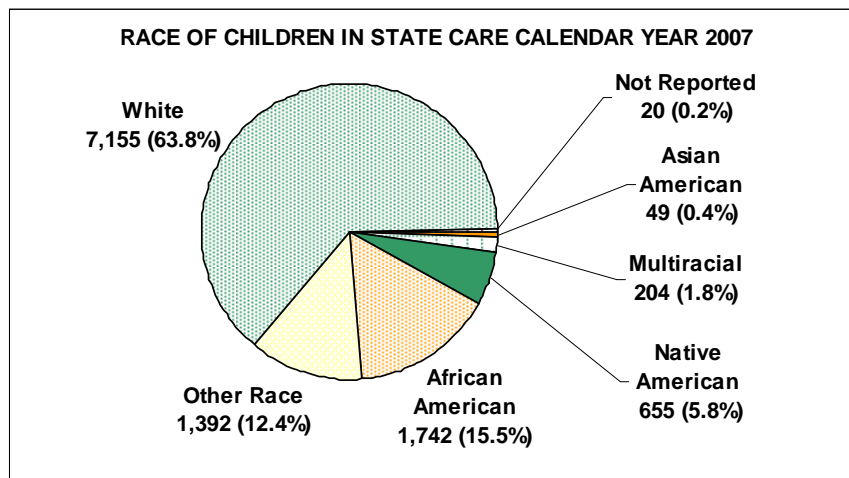
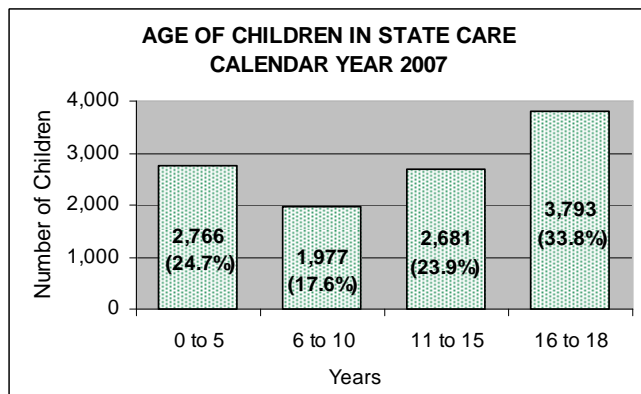
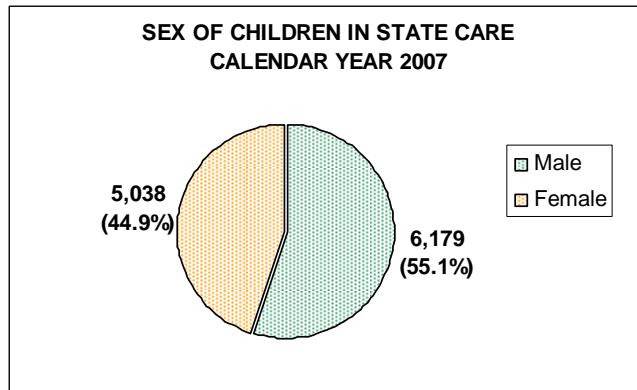
OVERVIEW OF CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

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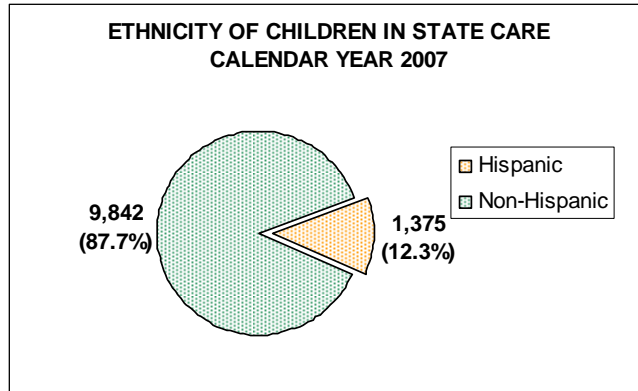
Throughout 2007, there were 11,217 children and youth in the state's legal custody. Of these children, 55.1% were male and 44.9% were female.

The majority (33.8%) of youth were between 16 and 19 years of age. Nearly one-quarter (24.7%) of the youth were five years of age or younger, and slightly less (23.9%) were between 11 and 15 years of age. Under one-fifth (17.6%) of youth were between six and ten years of age.

Most (63.8%) children in care during 2007 were White. African American children comprised 15.5% of the state ward population, Native American children 5.8%, and Asian children 0.4%. A small percent of children (1.8%) were multiracial, and 12.4% of children were some "other" race not identified by the above categories.



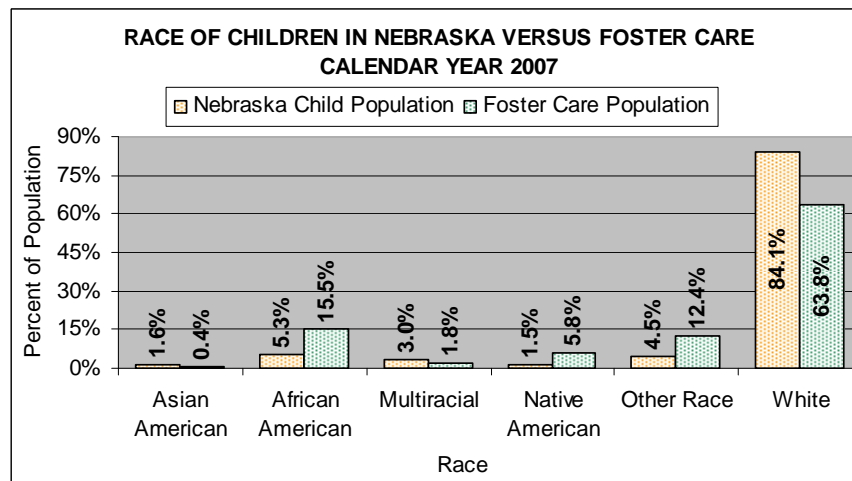
OVERVIEW OF CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS



Overall, 12.3% of all children in care during 2007 were Hispanic.

Comparisons between the population of Nebraska's children in state care and the overall child population throughout the state reveal an over-representation of African American youth and Native American youth in the foster care system.

According to 2006 U.S. Census Bureau survey estimates, African American children comprise approximately 5.3% of the state's child population and Native American children comprise roughly 1.5% of the state's child population.^{1,2} During 2007, there were nearly three times more African American children and almost four times more Native American children in state care than in the state's overall child population.



¹ United States Census Bureau. (2006). *American Community Survey*. Washington, D.C.: United States Census Bureau.

² United States Census Bureau estimates were made for children 17 years of age and younger. The age of majority in Nebraska is 19 years of age, at which age youth are discharged from state care. N-FOCUS data includes counts of all youth up to 19 years of age (i.e., 18 years or younger).

PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

A priority of the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services is that children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect, and safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. Our efforts toward achieving this outcome extend beyond the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services to individuals and agencies within the community. Staff work with families, children, relatives, law enforcement, school personnel, and other community members in numerous ways and at every step of the protection and safety process to meet this goal. The collaborative process begins with the initial report of child abuse and neglect; progresses to the assessment of child and community safety; and includes the provision of services, resources, and supports that families may need to establish safety for the family.

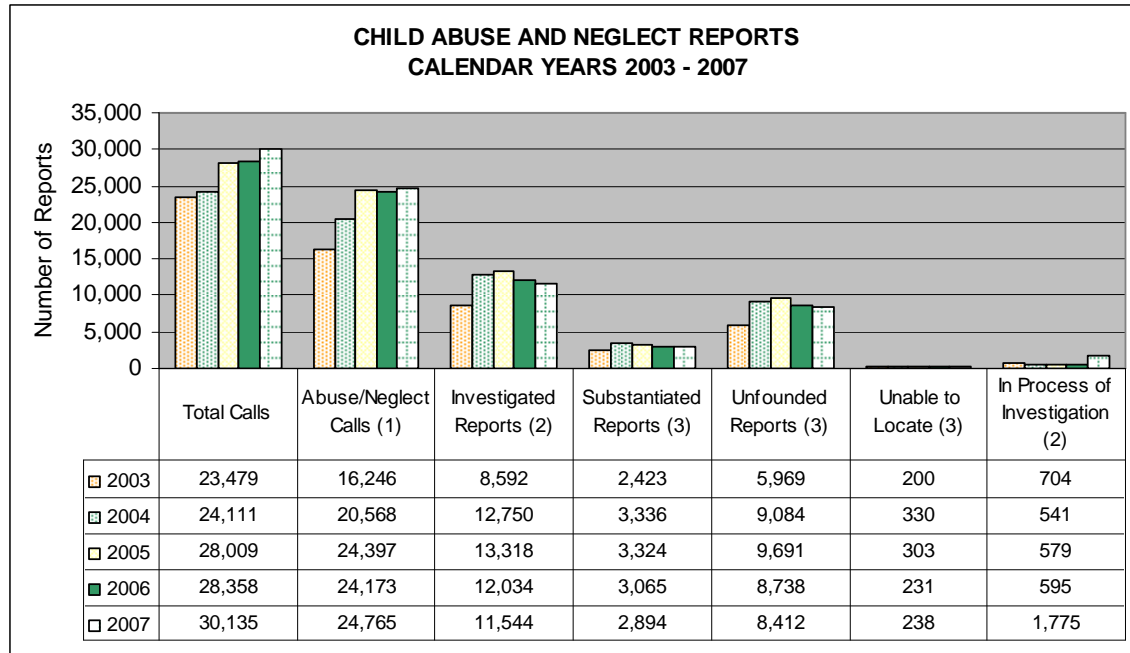
We recognize that intervening in a family's life can be very intrusive. For that reason, the Child Welfare Unit and the Office of Juvenile Services adhere to a family-centered philosophy of practice. One important factor in this philosophy is that families are actively involved in and often take the lead in working to establish safety for their children. Not only will families be more successful in establishing safety for their children if they are actively engaged in the process, but they will gain the self sufficiency needed to maintain child safety once the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services are no longer involved.

REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services receive most reports of child abuse and neglect on the 24-hour Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline (1-800-652-1999). Specialized intake workers who staff the hotline receive referrals of child abuse and neglect from a variety of sources, such as teachers, relatives, neighbors, law enforcement, and other community members.

The number of calls received on the hotline each year continues to grow. In 2007, the hotline received 30,135 calls, the majority (82.2%) of which involved reports of child abuse and neglect. Over half (53.8%) of the child abuse and neglect reports received were investigated or were in the process of being investigated at the end of the year. The Department determined that nearly three-quarters (73.9%) of investigated child abuse and neglect reports were unfounded (that is, there was not a preponderance of evidence that the allegation occurred). The Department substantiated one-quarter (25.1%) of investigated reports (that is, the Department determined that the alleged abuse or neglect occurred, or the abuse had been substantiated by a court or was currently progressing through court). Last, Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services staff were unable to locate the individuals or families involved in a small percent (2.1%) of cases and were, therefore, unable to investigate further.

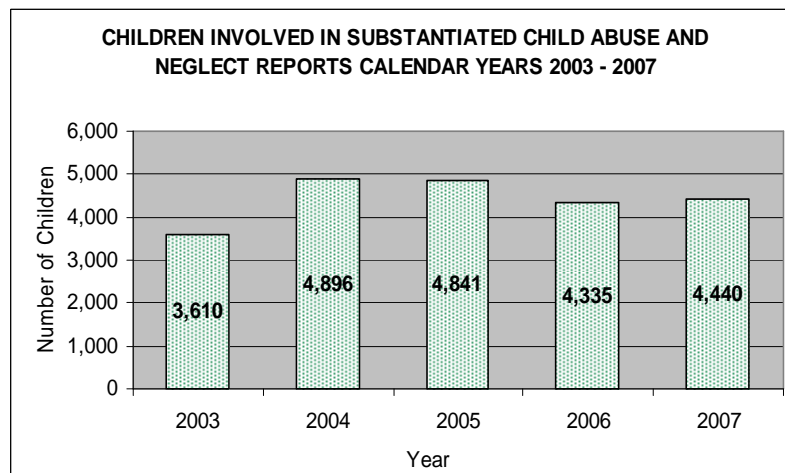
PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY



Notes. (1) denotes the number of "Total Calls" that were Abuse/Neglect Calls. (2) denotes the number of reports generated from "Abuse/Neglect Calls" that were investigated or in process of investigation. (3) denotes the number of "Investigated Reports" that were substantiated, unfounded, or unable to locate. "Substantiated Reports" indicates reports in which a finding of court substantiated, court pending, or inconclusive was made.

Types of Substantiated Child Abuse and Neglect

Some child abuse and neglect reports involve more than one child. For example, the 2,894 substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect in 2007 involved 4,440 children. These numbers indicate that the average number of children involved in a substantiated child abuse and neglect report was approximately 1.5 children.

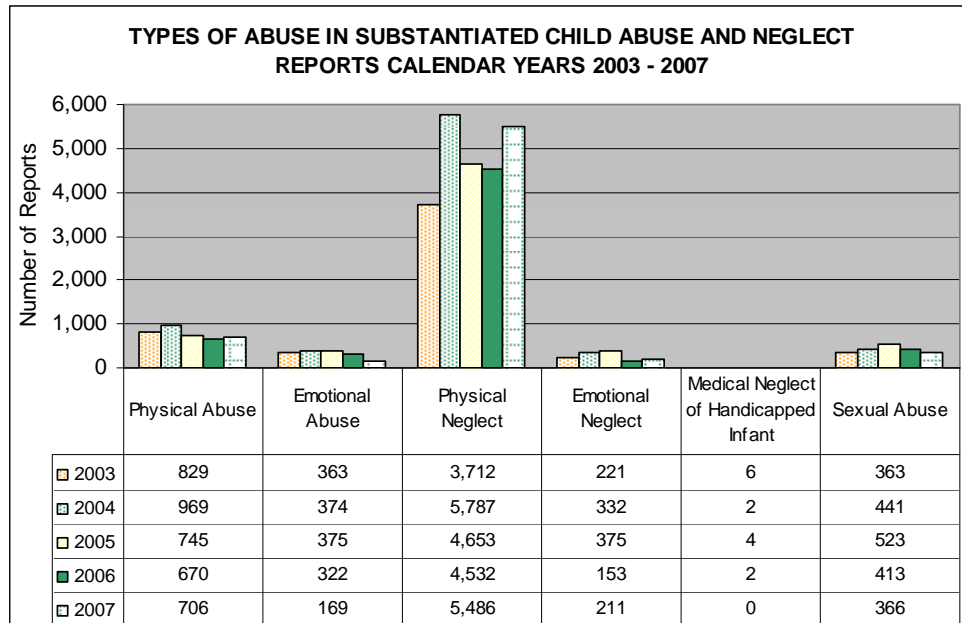


Just as a report can include multiple children, it can also involve more than one type of abuse or neglect. The most common type of abuse in substantiated maltreatment reports by far is physical neglect. The second most common type of abuse is physical abuse, followed by sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and emotional abuse.

For the most part, this pattern remains true from year to year. There are, however, slight fluctuations in the number of reports involving each type of abuse from year to year. Over the last two years, the number of substantiated reports involving physical neglect,

PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

emotional neglect, and/or physical abuse increased by 21.1%, 38.0%, and 5.4% respectively. In contrast, the number of substantiated reports involving sexual abuse decreased 11.4% and the number of substantiated reports involving emotional abuse decreased 47.6%.



STATE SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services monitor performance in establishing safety for the children and families we serve according to both state and national performance measures. State-established measures evaluate our performance in providing appropriate and timely responses to reports of child abuse and neglect, completing and documenting initial assessments of abuse and neglect, and providing timely services to children and families. We base our 2007 performance on these state measures using the State Fiscal Year (SFY) calendar of July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007.

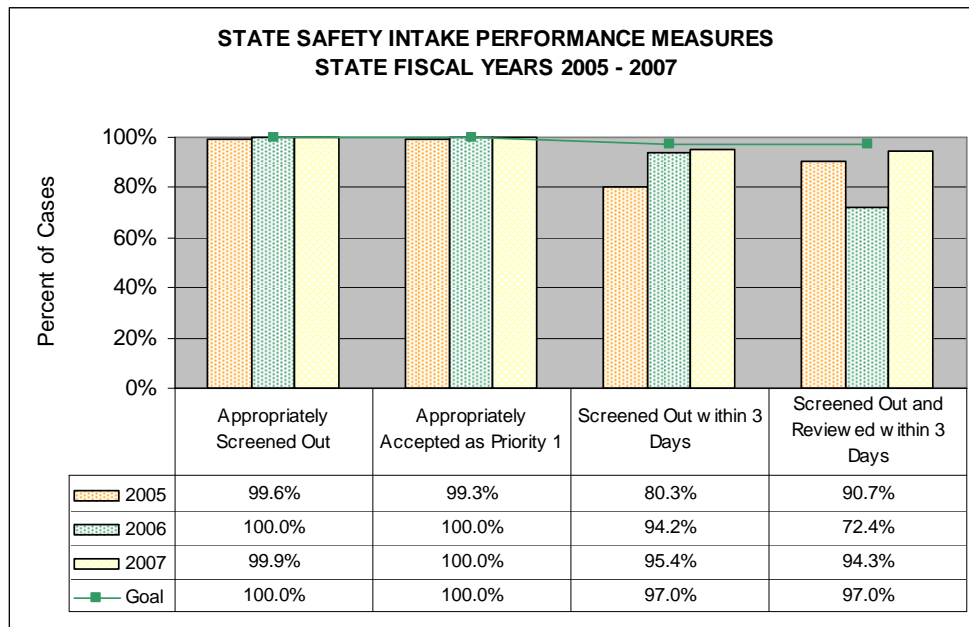
Intake

When intake workers receive a report of child abuse and neglect on the hotline, they must first gather sufficient information from the caller to determine if the report meets statutory and Department definitions of child maltreatment. Workers use an intake tool that guides them through this information gathering and decision-making process. Cases are “screened out” only if the report does not meet the definition of child maltreatment. In some cases the circumstances of the report may be unclear and workers will need to gather additional information or make contact with others involved in the case. The goal for completing this process is to do so within three days of receiving the call, with supervisor review of the decision occurring within three days as well.

Nearly all (99.9%) of the child abuse and neglect reports screened out by intake workers in SFY2007 were screened out appropriately. This is a slight decrease from 100.0% of reports in SFY2006 and a slight increase from 99.6% in SFY2005. Of these reports,

PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

intake workers screened out 95.4% within three days of receiving the call, and supervisors reviewed 94.3% within three days of receiving the call. Both indicate improvement from the previous year.



If a child abuse and neglect report meets the definition of child maltreatment, intake workers accept the report for an initial assessment. Workers categorize accepted maltreatment reports according to a tiered priority response system. In this system, the level of priority is based on the threat to child safety that is detailed in the report (with the higher level of danger or risk to child safety leading to a shorter time for intervention). For example, intake workers categorize reports involving instances of life-threatening or serious danger to a child as Priority 1. In the last two years, workers appropriately accepted 100.0% of all Priority 1 reports.

Initial Assessment

The three-tiered priority system used during intake guides workers in making timely contact with the children and families involved in reports to conduct an initial assessment. For example, Priority 1 reports involving serious or life-threatening situations require caseworker contact within 24 hours; whereas Priority 2 cases require contact within 5 calendar days, and Priority 3 cases require contact within 10 calendar days. There are further guidelines for documentation and service provision as well.

Priority 1:

- Face-to-face contact with a child within 24 hours (goal = 100%); and
- Completed documentation and service provision within 10 workdays (goal = 95%).

Priority 2:

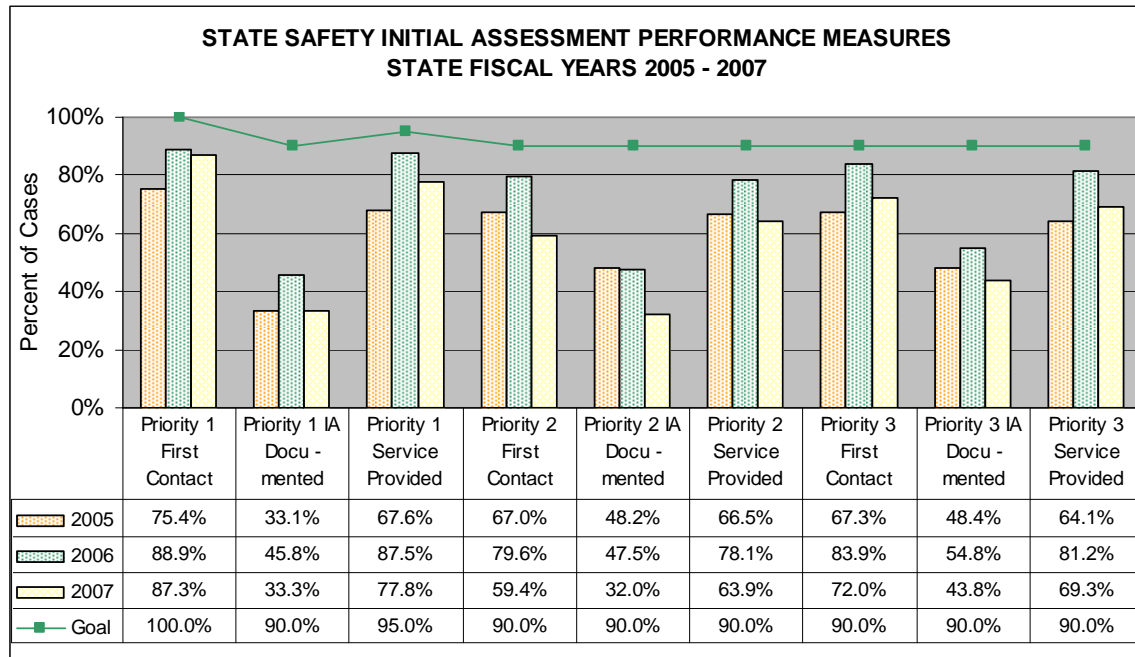
- Face-to-face contact with a child within 5 calendar days (goal = 90%); and
- Completed documentation and service provision within 20 workdays (goal = 90%).

Priority 3:

- Face-to-face contact with a child within 10 calendar days (goal = 90%); and
- Completed documentation and service provision within 30 workdays (goal = 90%).

PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

In SFY2007, worker performance in making timely contact with children and families involved in maltreatment reports, documenting initial assessments, and providing necessary services decreased from the previous year. While worker performance falls short of the state-established goals in all performance areas, it is particularly lagging in completion of timely documentation. We cannot dismiss the importance of thoroughly documenting information in all cases on time; however, making timely contact with children and families to assure safety takes precedent. Thus, with competing priorities, workers appear to be focusing their efforts on making first contact with children, particularly in Priority 1 cases.



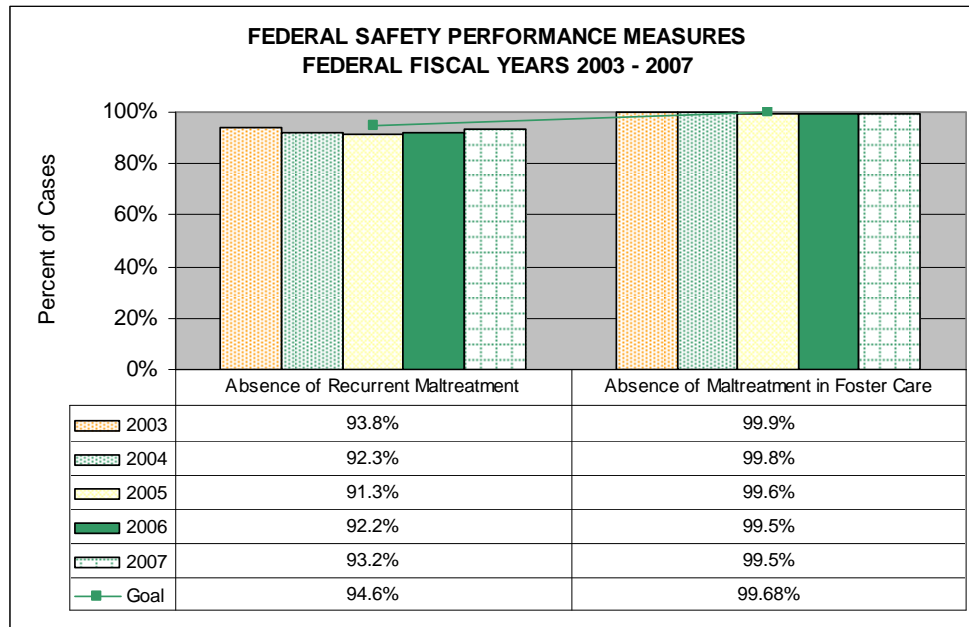
FEDERAL SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Federal safety performance measures provide an additional analysis of the state's performance in maintaining child safety. These measures specifically address the recurrence of maltreatment by parents or caregivers and maltreatment by foster parents or foster care facility staff.

Each year Nebraska submits data on the child abuse and neglect reports received by the state and the cases that stem from those reports. The federal government then uses this and other data related to the federal performance measures for a number of purposes, including the *Annual Child Welfare Report to Congress*, the data profile related to the federal Child and Family Services Reviews, and federal program funding allocations. We base our 2007 performance on the federal measures using the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) calendar of October 1, 2006, through September 30, 2007.

The percent of cases in which repeat maltreatment by parents or caregivers was absent has steadily increased in the last two years (from 91.3% in FFY2005 to 93.2% in FFY2007), after a brief decline in previous years (from 93.8% in FFY2003 to 91.3% in FFY2005). Despite the improvement, the state was still 1.4% shy of the federal goal in FFY2007.

PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

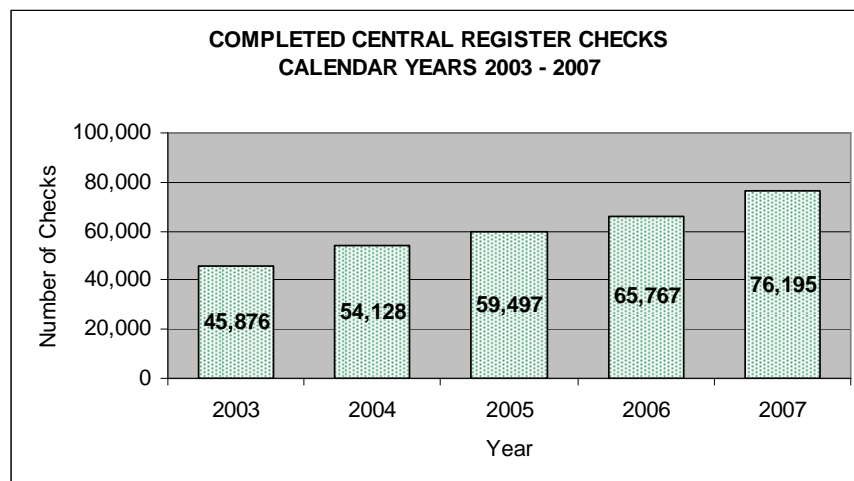


There has been a slight but steady decline in the percent of cases in which maltreatment by a foster parent or foster care facility staff was absent, from 99.9% of cases in FFY2003 to 99.5% of cases in FFY2007. As of FFY2007, the state is 0.18% below the federal goal.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CENTRAL REGISTER

By law, the Department of Health and Human Services must keep electronic records of individuals who are found responsible for child abuse and neglect by either the courts or the Department. We maintain these records in the Nebraska Child Abuse and Neglect Central Register. When intake workers receive a child abuse and neglect report, they check the register for the names of the individuals identified in the report as being responsible for the maltreatment. The Department also completes a majority of register checks at the request of agencies who require this information when hiring employees or recruiting volunteers.

Employers most often requesting record checks are group home providers, schools, child care agencies, and other entities that work with children. All requests for Central Register checks must be received by the Department in writing and include



PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

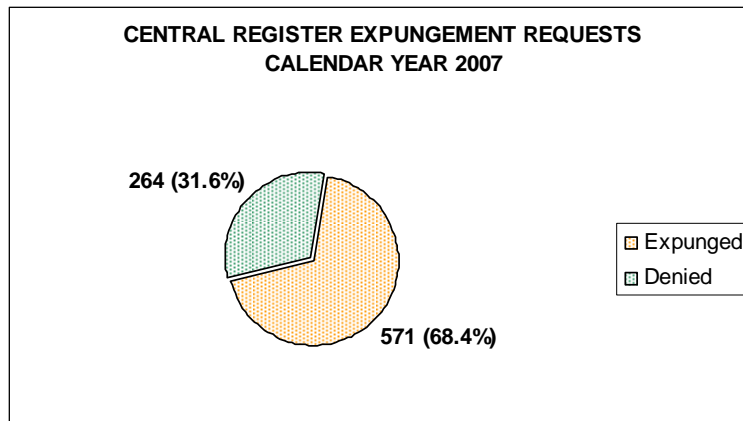
the individual's signature.

The number of requests for Central Register checks continues to grow each year. In 2007, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services completed 76,195 register checks. This number represents a 13.7% increase over the number of checks completed in 2006, and a 30.2% increase in the number of checks completed in 2003.

Expungements from the Central Register

When the Department or the courts determine an individual is responsible for child abuse or neglect, the Department will notify the individual in writing that they will be entering the individual's name into the Central Register. State law provides individuals the opportunity to request that the Department remove, amend, or expunge their information from the register if they believe the information is inaccurate or that the Department has not maintained the information in a manner consistent with law.

Child Welfare Unit staff in the Division of Children and Family Services' Central Office process all requests for expungements (i.e., removal of a person's name from the register). Staff and Department of Health and Human Services' attorneys review the case files and any information the individual presents on why the Department should remove, amend, or expunge their information from the register. Staff make the initial decision to expunge the individual's name from the register or deny the request to do so. If staff deny a request, individuals can request an administrative hearing in which an administrative hearing officer reviews the information a second time. The administrative officer then makes a recommendation on the case to the Department Director, who makes the ultimate decision to grant or deny an individual's request for their name to be removed, amended, or expunged from the register. If the Department Director denies a request, individuals have the right to further appeal the decision to the Lancaster District Court.



In 2007, the Child Welfare Unit reviewed 835 cases involving requests for expungement. Approximately two thirds (68.4%) of these requests were granted, and 31.6% were denied.

OFFICE OF JUVENILE SERVICES

The Office of Juvenile Services and the Child Welfare Unit, both within the Division of Children and Family Services, are partner entities in the broader child protection and safety system. The Office of Juvenile Services provides services to youth who have committed delinquent acts. Its functions include obtaining and coordinating pre-disposition evaluations of youth who are committed to temporary custody by the courts; overseeing the administration of the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC); informing disposition decisions and participating in parole revocation hearings;

PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

and providing case management services to youth who are conditionally released from the YRTC's for parole supervision and youth who are committed by the courts for direct community supervision. The Office of Juvenile Services provides community-based services that combine behavior management, community reentry services, intensive supervision, restorative justice principles, and rehabilitative programming to meet the multiple needs of youth.

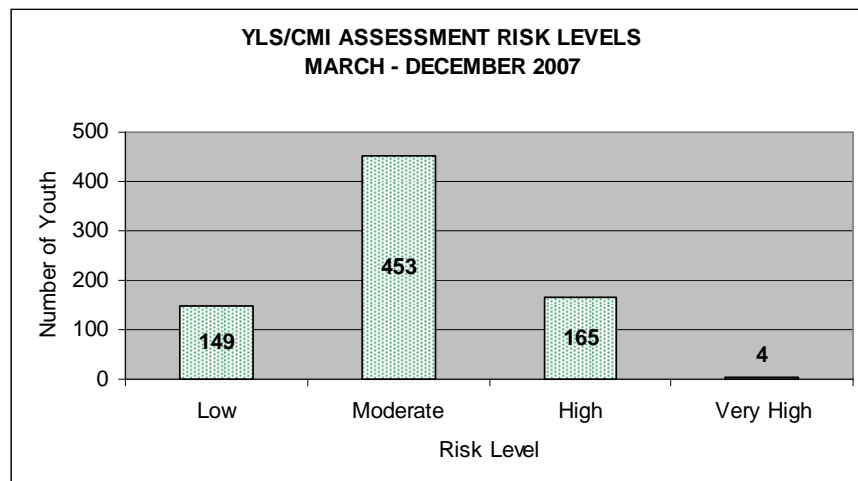
Pre-Disposition Evaluations

Once a court has determined that a youth has committed a delinquent act, the court may place the youth in the temporary custody of the Office of Juvenile Services. During this time, the Office of Juvenile Services arranges for a licensed treatment provider to conduct an initial pre-disposition evaluation of the youth. A pre-disposition evaluation is composed of a clinical assessment and an initial risk classification and needs assessment. The evaluation determines the appropriate treatment plan, level of care, and supervision needed to manage a youth's risks and to meet the youth's needs. It ultimately serves as guidance and support in balancing offender accountability, treatment, and community safety. In 2007, the Office of Juvenile Services coordinated 1,431 pre-disposition evaluations of youth.

Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory

In March 2006, the Office of Juvenile Services implemented the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). The YLS/CMI is a validated risk and needs assessment tool for juvenile offenders. The assessment is one component to the pre-disposition evaluations detailed above. The purpose of the assessment is to determine a youth's risk to reoffend and to identify the appropriate level of treatment and type of services needed to manage a youth's risk. The process involves a structured interview with the youth and family to identify their strengths and needs. The assessment focuses on eight domains: prior and current offenses and dispositions; family circumstances and parenting; education and employment; peer relations; substance abuse; leisure and recreation; personality and behavior; and attitudes and orientation.

The Office of Juvenile Services began electronically recording YLS/CMI assessments in the state's data system in March 2007. From March 2007 through December 2007, 771 youth underwent an assessment. The assessments identified the majority of youth (58.8%) as being at a moderate level of risk. Over one-fifth (21.4%) were assessed as high risk, 19.3% were assessed as low risk, and 0.5% were assessed as very high risk.

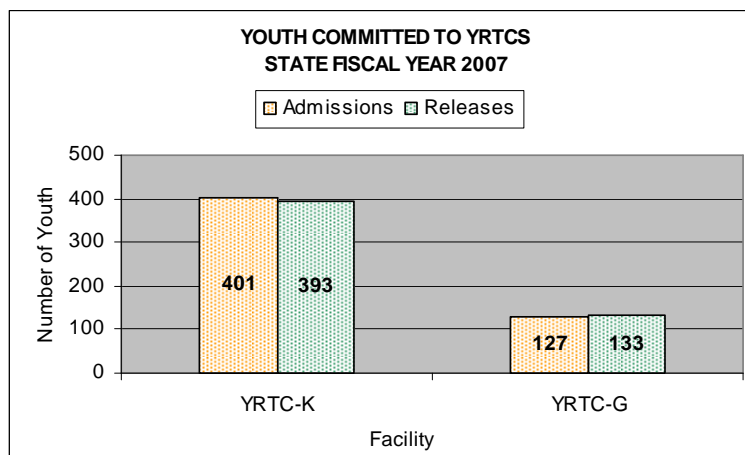


PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers

The Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC) provide residential services to youth between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age who have been court adjudicated as juvenile delinquents and committed to state custody by the courts or who are awaiting a court hearing (referred to as a “court safekeeper”). YRTC-Kearney (YRTC-K) is the rehabilitation and treatment center for males. YRTC-Geneva (YRTC-G) is the rehabilitation and treatment center for females.

YRTC-Kearney’s (YRTC-K) mission is to help youth live better lives through effective services affording youth the opportunity to become law-abiding and productive citizens. YRTC-K offers a variety of educational, recreational, community service, and treatment programs for youth in care. Educational services include special education, career education, pre-vocational education, and classes in media and technology. Recreation services include intramural sports, open recreation sessions, and physical education. Community services include facility maintenance at the Lillian Annette Rowe Bird Sanctuary, participation in the “Adopt-A-Road” campaign, and volunteer services to the Salvation Army during the holidays. Treatment services include psychological, chemical dependency, trauma, and sex offender programming.



In SFY2007, there were 401 youth admitted to YRTC-K and 393 youth released from YRTC-K, with an average daily population of 153 youth. The average length of stay at the facility was approximately 7 months. Throughout the year, youth provided 44 local organizations with 4,140 labor hours of volunteer service.

YRTC-Geneva’s (YRTC-G) mission is to protect society by providing a safe, secure, and nurturing environment in which the young women who come to the center may learn, develop a sense of self, and return to the community as productive law-abiding citizens. To accomplish this, YRTC-G provides diverse programming in response to each individual’s unique needs. It offers a variety of educational, recreational, community service, and treatment programs, most recently including a “Mother and Babies Program” and a gender-responsive treatment program. YRTC-G’s gender-responsive programming takes into account the specific treatment needs of young girls and shapes both its content and delivery of services around these identified needs.

During SFY2007, there were 127 youth admitted to YRTC-G and 133 youth released from the YRTC-G, with an average daily population of 75 youth. The average length of stay at YRTC-G was 7.5 months. Youth at the YRTC-G volunteered throughout the year in various capacities, including crocheting items for homeless shelters, making and sending ornaments to soldiers in Iraq, raising funds and participating in the “Relay for

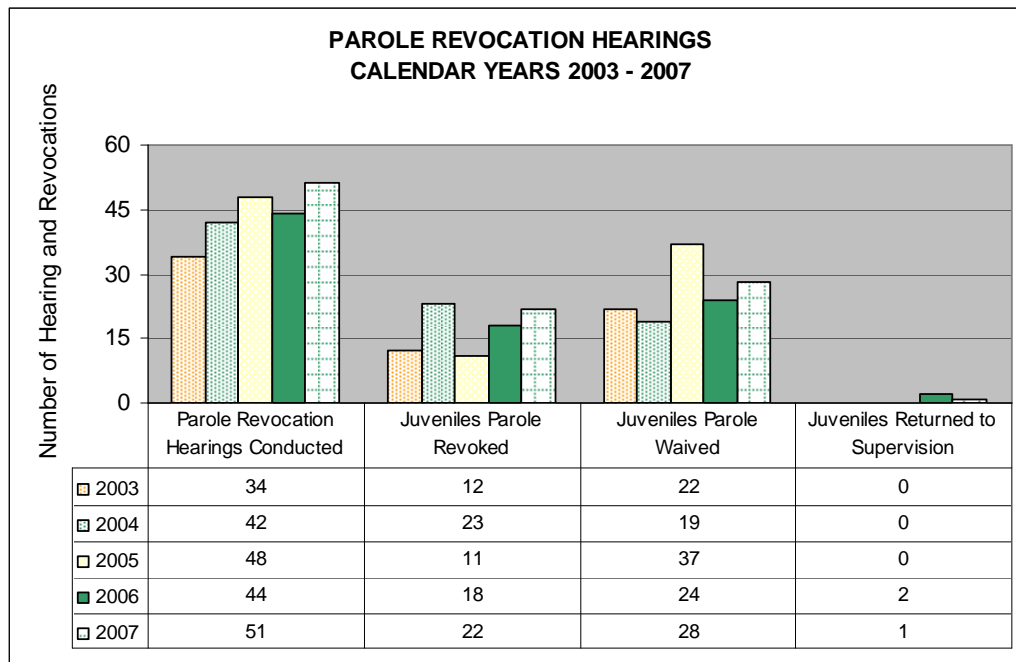
PRIORITY OUTCOME: SAFETY

Life Walk,” participating in the “Adopt-A-Highway” campaign, and volunteering at the local retirement home and senior center.

Parole Revocation Hearings

If a youth who is conditionally released from a YRTC for parole supervision violates the terms of his or her Conditions of Liberty, the Department of Health and Human Services conducts a parole revocation hearing. Parole revocation hearings are a formal procedure structured to ensure the due process of rights of youth on parole as well as to serve the best interests of the youth and the community at large. Licensed attorneys within the Department of Health and Human Services’ Legal Division conduct the hearings. The Office of Juvenile Services provides independent legal representation for youth.

Parole revocation hearings increased from 44 hearings in 2006 to 51 hearings in 2007. This is the highest number of parole revocation hearings since 2004. In the majority (54.9%) of hearings, youth waived their right to a formal hearing and automatically returned to a YRTC. In 43.1% of the hearings, a decision was made to revoke a youth’s parole. In one hearing, it was determined that the youth would remain on parole and return to community supervision.



PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

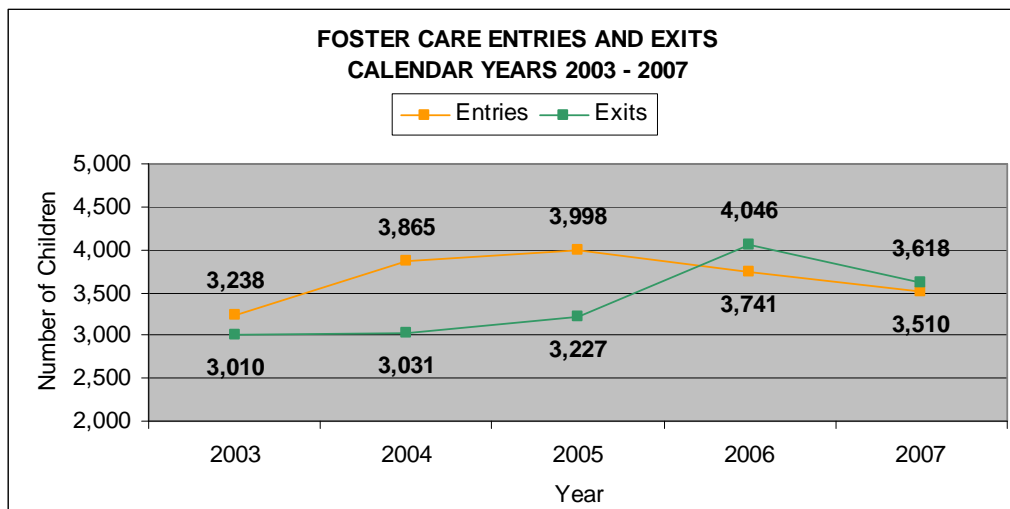
Permanent and stable living environments and the continuity of family relationships and connections are critical to a child's well-being. Recognizing this, Governor Dave Heineman launched a series of initiatives aimed at establishing permanency for children under state care in June 2006. Under Governor Heineman's initiatives, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services have and will continue to:

1. Place priority on resolving cases involving children between the ages of zero and five;
2. Place priority on achieving permanent placements for children who have spent 15 or more of the last 22 months in state care;
3. Prioritize the resolution of cases where children were either never removed from home, or have been living safely at home for seven or more months but have not yet been released from state custody by the judicial system;
4. Begin working with public schools to decrease the number of truancy cases referred to the state, so caseworkers can focus on protection and safety issues;
5. Explore the feasibility of cross-training caseworkers for a concentrated, coordinated effort to decrease caseloads over a defined period of time; and
6. Work to build stronger relationships with other partners in the child welfare system to encourage greater cooperation with Nebraska's courts, county attorneys, and law enforcement agencies.

Governor Heineman also identified: accelerated reform of the child welfare system; and improved performance in the state's federal Child and Family Services Review, as two of ten priorities for the Department of Health and Human Services for 2007 and 2008.

Since the launching of these initiatives, The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services have focused their efforts on establishing safety and permanency for the children included under the priority populations identified in the initiatives. By the end of 2007, over half (52.7%) of the cases that fit these priorities since the launching of these initiatives in June 2006 have been resolved.

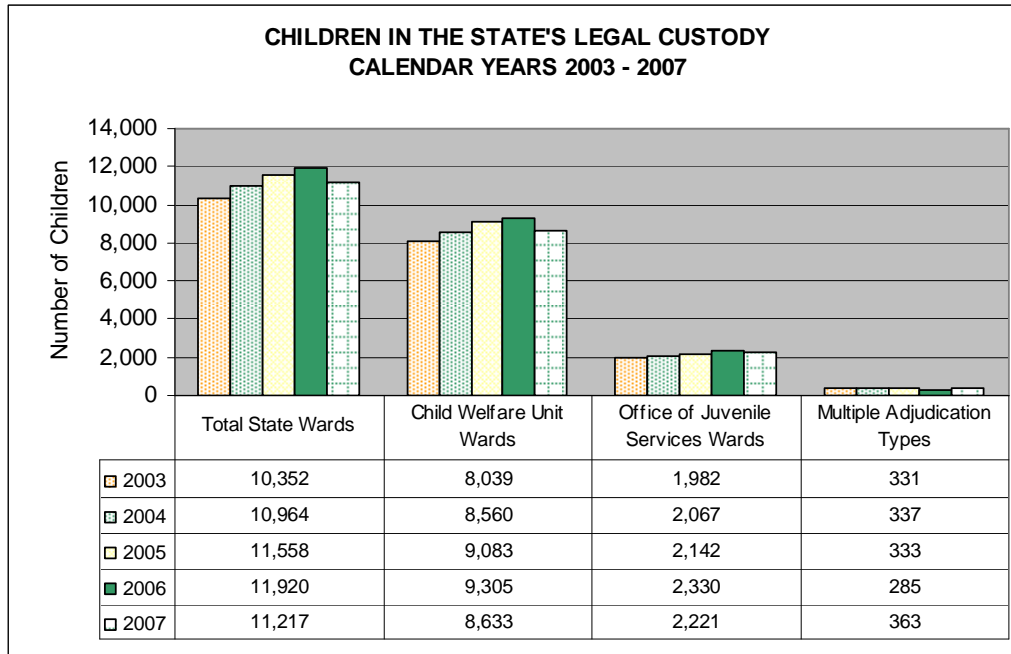
This year also marks the second year in which the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services have safely resolved more cases overall than they had received throughout the year. Prior to 2006, more children were entering care than were safely exiting from care each year.



PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

CHILD WELFARE UNIT AND OFFICE OF JUVENILE SERVICES STATE WARDS

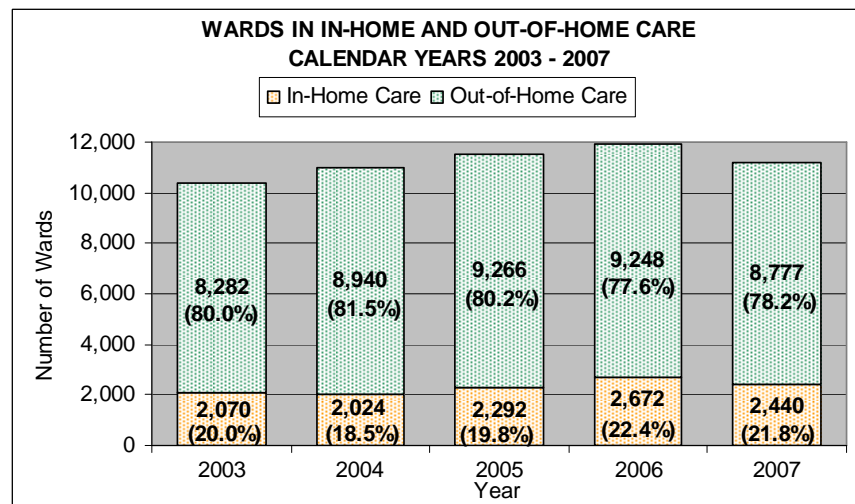
In recent years, the number of children in state care continued to grow each year. This year however, is the first year in which the data indicates that this trend has reversed. From 2003 to 2006, the population of state wards steadily grew at a rate of 3.1% to 5.9%. In 2007, the population of state wards decreased by 5.9%.



In-Home and Out-of-Home Care

It is our priority to keep children in their home while they receive services, if children are safe in the home. When families, caseworkers, and/or other services or supports cannot help ensure safety in the home, out-of-home placement becomes necessary. Over three-quarters

(78.2%) of wards were removed from home by law enforcement and/or the courts and placed in out-of-home care at some time during the year. This percent has remained fairly consistent over the last four years, ranging from 77.6% to 81.5% of the population receiving out-of-home care at some point each year.



PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

We anticipate an eventual decrease in the number of wards removed from home with the implementation of our new Nebraska Safety Intervention System (detailed in the *Major Accomplishments 2007* section of this report). The new system allows for greater opportunity to provide service intervention to children in the home and with active involvement and support of the family, relatives, and other informal supports, based on a thorough assessment of safety.

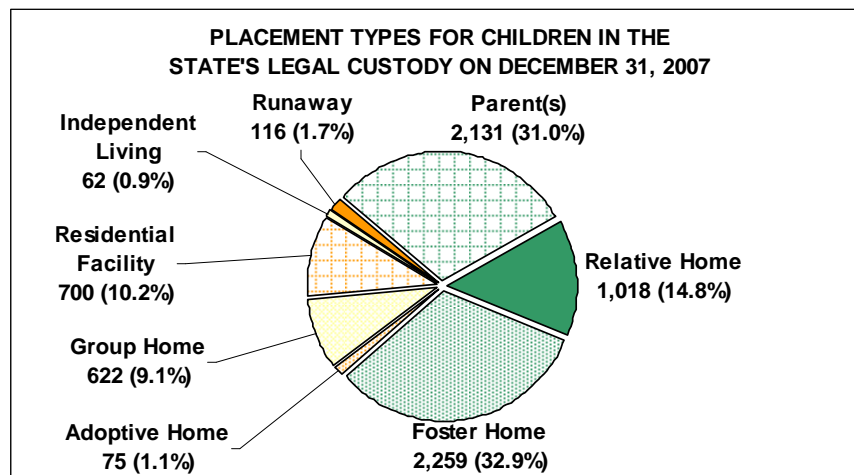
Whenever law enforcement or the courts remove children from their home and place the children in out-of-home care, caseworkers make every effort to select the least restrictive, most family-like settings that meet the children's individual interests and needs. Ideally, caseworkers are able to place children within close proximity to their family, school, and community so the children can maintain a connection to their family and friends.

The Department of Health and Human Services licenses or approves all out-of-home care settings to ensure the settings meet specific criteria and that children receive adequate care. There was an average of 3,777 licensed and approved out-of-home care settings in 2007. These settings include relative foster homes, non-relative foster homes, treatment homes, adoptive homes, group homes, facilities, and independent living settings.

For the most part, out-of-home care settings are designed to be temporary placements for children while their families are in crisis and unable to provide for their safety. Adoptive homes and independent living settings, however, typically serve as more permanent placement settings for youth who are unable to return home due to safety concerns. Adoptive homes provide children with foster care services until their adoption is legally final. Independent living settings provide a safe environment in which youth can achieve self sufficiency to live on their own.

Relative foster homes are the preferred out-of-home care setting. Placing children with a relative can help alleviate the psychological trauma of leaving their home and allow children to maintain their sense of personal identity and connection to the only world they have known. Relative placement settings have also shown to be more permanent placements options when compared to placements with unrelated foster care providers. Unfortunately, there can be barriers to placing children in a relative's home. A child may have special needs that a relative provider may not be able to meet, the only known relatives to a child may live in another state, or a relative home may not offer a safe environment for that child.

At the close of 2007, 6,983 children were under the state's legal custody. As of December 31, 2007, most (32.9%) of these

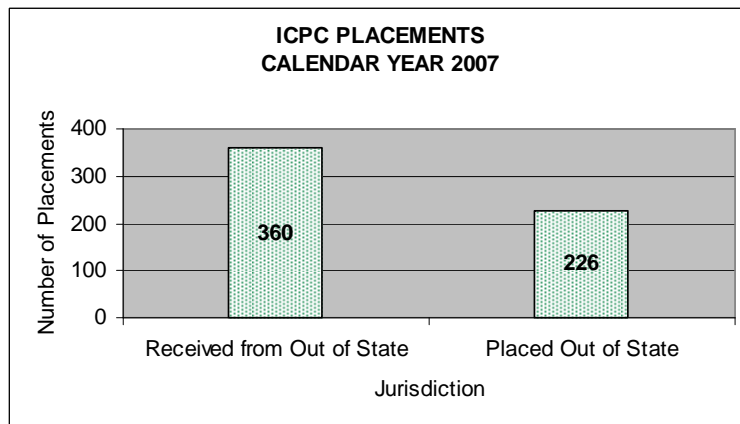


PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

children were living in non-relative foster homes. Just over one-third (31.0%) of children were living with their parents and 14.8% were living with relatives. The remaining children in state care were residing in residential facilities (10.2%), group homes (9.1%), adoptive homes (1.1%), independent living environments (0.9%), or currently in a runaway status (1.7%).

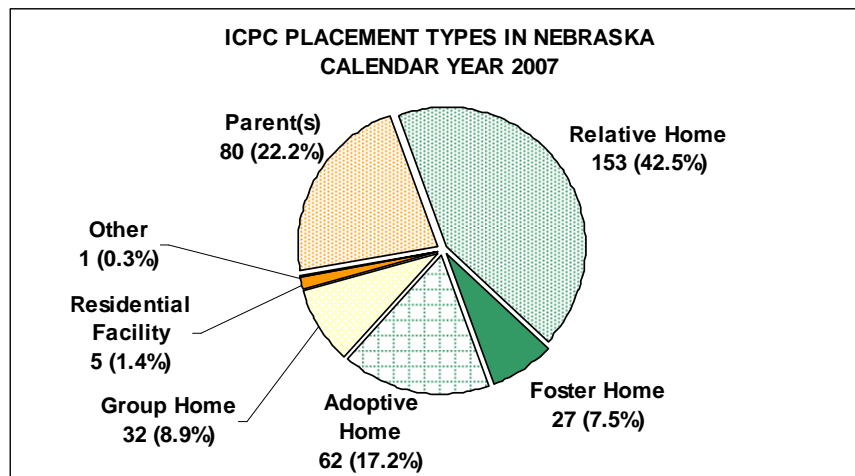
Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is a law enacted by all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ICPC provides uniform procedures for placing children from one state or jurisdiction into another state or jurisdiction. The law requires most all agencies and individuals who are placing a child out of state to complete an ICPC agreement. The only exceptions to this law are cases in which a parent, grandparent, adult sibling, aunt, uncle, or guardian sends a child out of state, to be placed in the care of a relative or other guardian in another state. Citizens, public and private agencies, courts, and Tribes can place children out of state under an ICPC agreement. Public agencies make the majority of out-of-state placements under an ICPC agreement for Nebraska children.



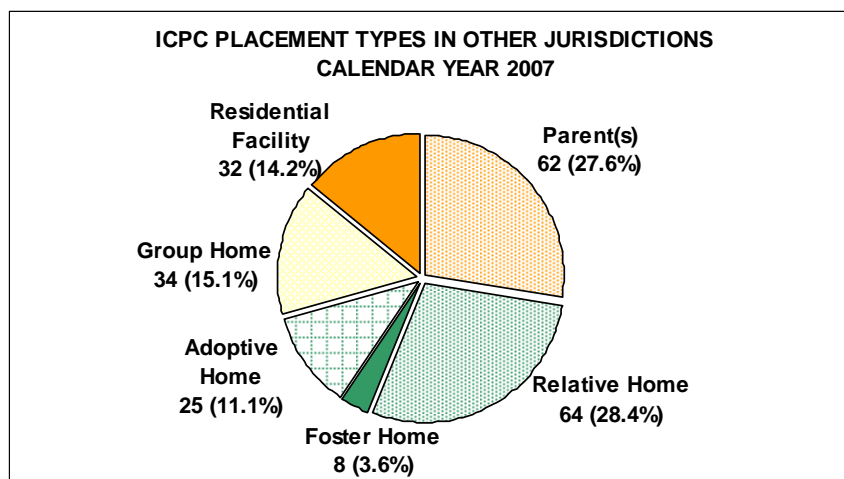
In 2007, the State of Nebraska placed 226 children in out-of-state placements under ICPC agreements. Other states or jurisdictions sent 360 children to Nebraska under ICPC agreements.

(27.6%). A large percent of the children sent to Nebraska from other states came to the state to live with relatives (42.5%) and parents (22.2%).



PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

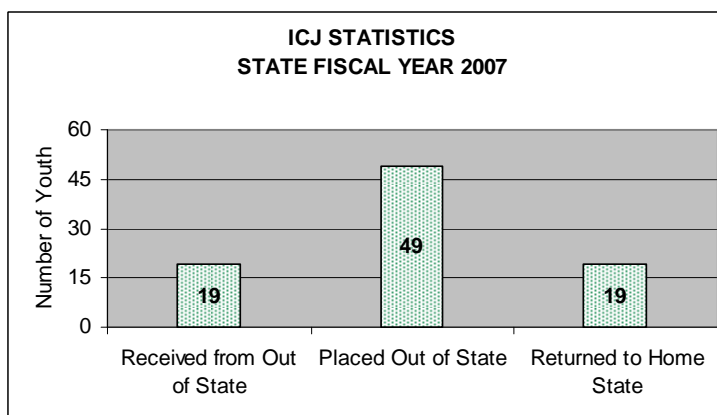
Other states sent more children to Nebraska to reside in adoptive homes (17.2%) and foster homes (7.5%). In contrast, Nebraska sent more children out of state for placement in group homes (15.1%) and residential facilities (14.2%).



Interstate Compact on Juveniles

The Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ) is a law enacted by all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ICJ provides formal procedures for states to monitor the movement of juveniles who are under court supervision across state lines, and to ensure the welfare and protection of juveniles and the public in the process. Under the law, states cooperate to provide for the supervision of delinquent youth who are placed on parole in one state and want to reside in another state or who require care or services located in another state; and for the return of youth who have run away from home, absconded from parole, escaped from an institution, or who have been charged for a delinquent act and have fled to another state. Each scenario requires a formal process involving the cooperating states, such as the completion of an application for a youth to reside in another state or a court process for returning youth to their home state.

In Nebraska, the ICJ is administered by the Office of Juvenile Services and the Office of Probation Administration. In SFY2007, 49 youth were sent from Nebraska to reside in some other state under the ICJ. During that same time period, 19 youth were sent to Nebraska from other states under the ICJ. Nineteen youth were returned to another state or brought back to Nebraska after running away, escaping from an institution, or absconding from parole.



PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

STATE PERMANENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

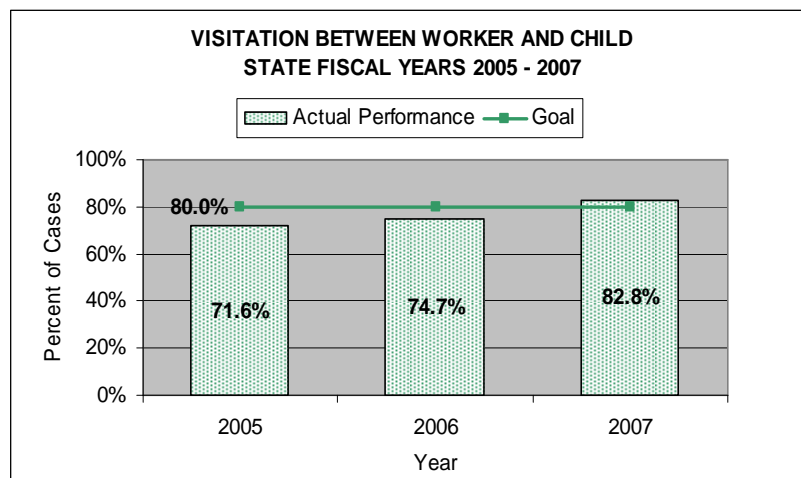
The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services continue to place a high proportion of children in out-of-home care. In recent years, we have made efforts to establish permanency for the children we serve and to ultimately reduce the number of children we place in out-of-home care and the length of time children remain in out-of-home care. We monitor the progress of these efforts through our state permanency performance measures. These measures examine the frequency and consistency of worker contact with children and families, the reunification of children with their parents whenever possible, and the adoption of children for whom reunification is no longer an option.

Visitation

Child welfare experts agree that caseworker visitation with children and families is important to establishing safety, permanency, and well-being for the children and families involved in the child welfare system. Frequent and consistent visits with children and families provide caseworkers the opportunity to assess the family for the services and supports they need to create a safe and stable home environment for their children and to plan and deliver those unique services to the family. Nationwide findings from the first round of the Child and Family Services Reviews reveal a positive association between caseworker visits with children and family and many of the outcomes that our federal partners examine in the reviews. For example, caseworkers' performance in conducting visits with children and parents was positively correlated to their performance in establishing appropriate permanency goals and achieving those goals in a timely manner.³

For that reason, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services expect caseworkers to visit with the children and parents with whom they work on a minimum monthly basis. We have set goals to assist staff in working towards meeting this expectation. The state goal for worker visitation with children is that workers will conduct a minimum of monthly visits in at least 80% of cases. In regard to workers' visits with parents, the goal is that workers will conduct a minimum of monthly visits in at least 50% of the cases.

Workers have gradually improved in conducting visits with both children and parents. The percent of cases in which workers have visited children at least once per month rose from 71.6% of cases in SFY2005 to 82.8% of



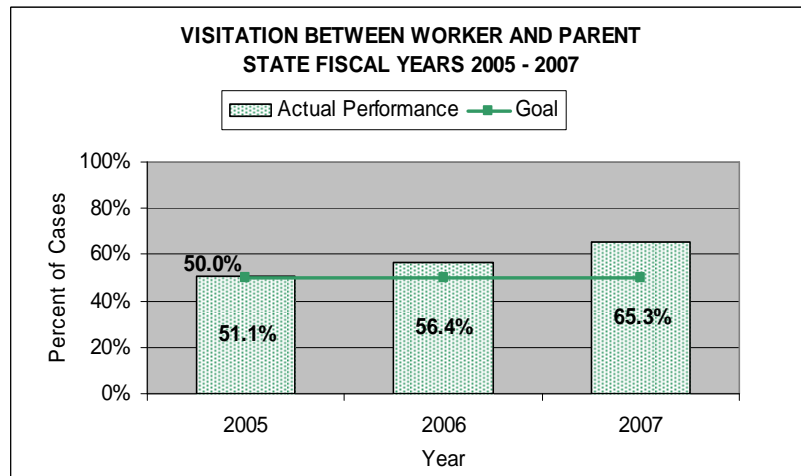
³ Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Findings From the Initial Child and Family Services Reviews, 2001–2004*, available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/results/index.htm>.

PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

cases in SFY2007. This year is the first year workers have reached the 80% goal in this measure.

Workers are also meeting the goal of conducting monthly visits with parents in at least 50% of cases and have done so since SFY2005.

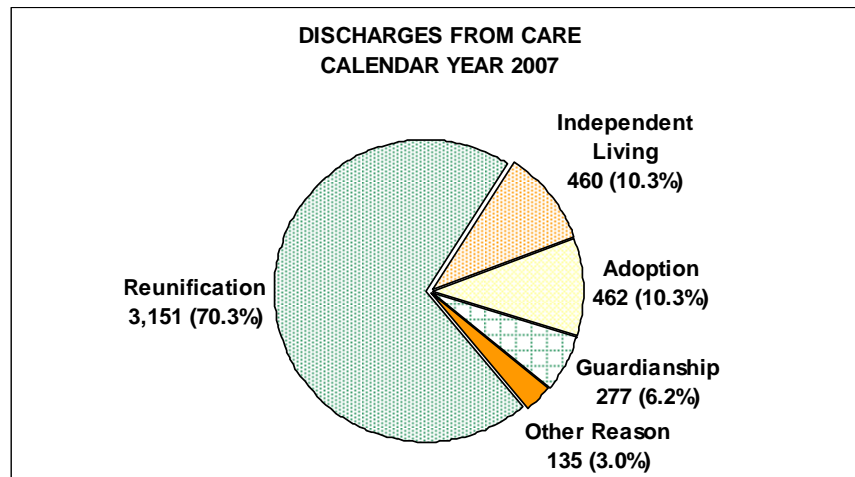
Performance has improved in this area with monthly parent visits conducted in 51.1% of cases in SFY2005, 56.4% in SFY2006, and 65.3% in SFY2007.



Reunification

When the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services must place children in out-of-home care, our primary goal is to provide the services and supports that families need to establish safety for their children so that the children can return home as soon as possible.

In 2007, 4,485 children safely exited care. The majority (70.3%) of these children returned home to live safely with their families.

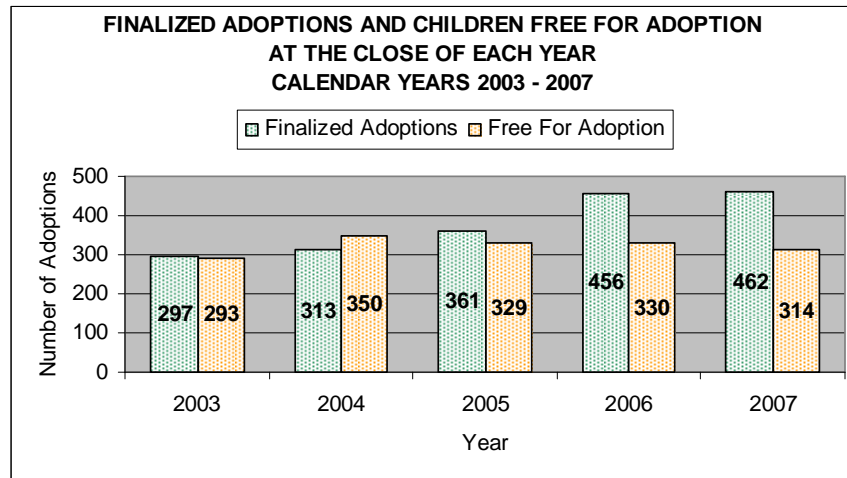


Adoption

There are instances in which family reunification is not in the best interests of children, despite the diligent efforts of workers and struggling families. In such cases, adoption is typically the preferred placement option. Adoption is more often the most permanent placement option for children. It can also provide children with the greatest sense of

PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

belonging. The Child Welfare Unit has placed an increased emphasis on adoption in cases in which family reunification is no longer possible.



The number of finalized adoptions has increased 57.2% in the last four years, from 297 adoptions in 2003 to 462 adoptions in 2007. At the close of 2007, there were 314 children in state care who were legally free for adoption. Forty-eight of these children were residing in adoptive homes, but the adoptions were not yet final by the end of the year.

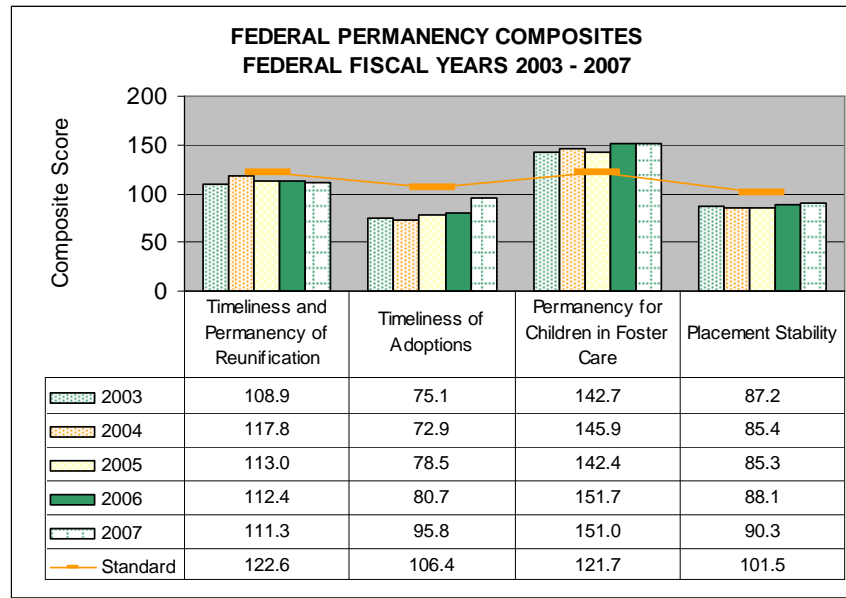
FEDERAL PERMANENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Federal performance measures also examine permanency and stability for children in out-of-home care. These measures specifically look at the timeliness of reunification, the timeliness of adoption, permanency for children in care for long periods of time, and placement stability for children in care.

In 2006, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) expanded the way in which they measured states' performance in establishing permanency and stability for children in care. Previously, the experts from the ACF used only one piece of data to inform each area of interest. For example, they analyzed the percent of children who states reunified with their families within twelve months of their entering care to indicate the overall timeliness of reunification. Child welfare experts realized, however, that these areas of interest are multidimensional and far more complex than any single indicator can explain. For that reason, they incorporated multiple data indicators into one composite measure for each area.

Over the last four years, Nebraska has met the national goal in one of the four federal permanency composites: Permanency for Children in Foster Care. Performance in achieving timely adoption and placement stability for children in care has steadily improved since FFY2004. Over that same time period, performance in achieving timely reunification for children has decreased.

PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY



Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification

Nebraska is not currently meeting any of the individual data indicators included in the first federal permanency composite although performance has improved in some areas and particularly for children entering care for the first time. The percent of children reunified with their families within 12 months of their *first* entry into care increased 5.8% from FFY2005 to FFY2007. However, the percent of children reunified with their families within 12 months of their *most recent* entry into care has decreased 4.4% over that same time period.

Over the last two years, children have been spending more time in care (an increase from 7.0 months in FFY2005 to 8.1 months in FFY2007) prior to their being reunified with their families. In the same time period, 1.8% fewer children reentered care after they returned home to their families. Thus, children remained in care for longer periods of time but they were less likely to reenter care once they returned home.

Federal Permanency Composites and Indicators	National Standard	FFY 2003	FFY 2004	FFY 2005	FFY 2006	FFY 2007
Composite 1. Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification	122.6	108.9	117.8	113.0	112.4	111.3
Exits to Reunification Within 12 Months of Most Recent Entry	75.2%	62.8%	63.9%	68.3%	66.3%	63.9%
Median Months in Care for Children Reunified Within 12 Months of Most Recent Entry*	5.4	8.1	7.9	7.0	8.0	8.1
Exits to Reunification Within 12 Months of First Entry	48.4%	43.1%	40.9%	38.5%	40.6%	44.3%
Reentry into Care for Children Exiting to Reunification*	9.9%	14.2%	9.7%	15.3%	14.1%	13.5%

* In these measures, a number or percent lower than that of the national standard is desired.

PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

Timeliness of Adoption

While Nebraska has not yet met the national goal in the composite related to timely adoptions, its performance has steadily increased from a score of 75.1 in FFY2003 to 95.8 in FFY2007. This year marks the first year that the state has met two of the five data indicators within this composite: the measure indicating the percent of children in care 17 months or longer who were adopted at the end of the year (23.2%) and the measure indicating the percent of children in care 17 months or longer who were legally free for adoption within six months from the beginning of the year (12.6%).

Over the last year, the percent of children adopted within 24 months of their entering care and the percent of children legally free for adoption and adopted within 12 months of their entering care also increased (3.0% and 13.4% respectively). The median months in care decreased 3.6 months.

Federal Permanency Composites and Indicators	National Standard	FFY 2003	FFY 2004	FFY 2005	FFY 2006	FFY 2007
Composite 2. Timeliness of Adoptions	106.4	75.1	72.9	78.5	80.7	95.8
Exits to Adoption Within 24 Months	36.6%	23.7%	15.5%	22.1%	16.5%	19.5%
Median Months in Care*	27.3	37.6	37.0	36.4	37.9	34.3
Children in Care 17+ Months and Adopted Within 12 Months	22.7%	16.3%	18.6%	17.3%	21.0%	23.2%
Children in Care 17+ Months and Legally Free for Adoption Within 6 Months	10.9%	8.5%	8.8%	6.8%	9.0%	12.6%
Children Legally Free for Adoption and Adopted Within 12 Months	53.7%	28.8%	37.4%	40.3%	39.8%	53.2%

* In these measures, a number lower than that of the national standard is desired.

Permanency for Children in Foster Care

Nebraska has met the national goal for this federal permanency composite and nearly every individual data indicator for the last four years. At the composite level, the state has consistently improved its performance since 2003 with the exception of a 3.5 decrease in score in FFY2005. In FFY2007, we discharged 38.7% of children in care 24 months or longer and 98.1% of children legally free for adoption to permanent homes. Less than one-quarter (23.5%) of children in care for three years or longer achieved independent living. All of these indicators fall within the national goals for these measures.

PRIORITY OUTCOME: PERMANENCY

Federal Permanency Composites and Indicators	National Standard	FFY 2003	FFY 2004	FFY 2005	FFY 2006	FFY 2007
Composite 3. Permanency for Children in Foster Care	121.7	142.7	145.9	142.4	151.7	151.0
Children in Care 24+ Months and Discharged to a Permanent Home	29.1%	31.0%	33.3%	30.3%	36.4%	38.7%
Children Legally Free for Adoption and Discharged to a Permanent Home	98.0%	98.0%	97.3%	97.8%	99.1%	98.1%
Children in Care 3+ Years and Discharged to Independent Living or Turned 18*	37.5%	27.2%	23.6%	25.1%	22.7%	23.5%

* In these measures, a percent lower than that of the national standard is desired.

Placement Stability for Children in Foster Care

Nebraska has improved performance in relation to the permanency composite measuring placement stability for children in care, from a score of 87.2 in FFY2003 to 90.3 in FFY2007. While we are not meeting the overall composite or any of the individual data indicators within the composite, we have increased performance within each data indicator over the last year. The percent of children in care who experience two or fewer placements ranges from 27.7% to 84.9%, depending on the length of time the children were in care. We have been more successful in maintaining two or fewer placements for children who are in care for shorter periods of time.

Federal Permanency Composites and Indicators	National Standard	FFY 2003	FFY 2004	FFY 2005	FFY 2006	FFY 2007
Composite 4. Placement Stability for Children in Foster Care	101.5	87.2	85.4	85.3	88.1	90.3
Children in Care Less Than 12 Months With 2 or Fewer Placements	86.0%	81.7%	80.1%	81.3%	82.6%	84.9%
Children in Care 12 to 24 Months With 2 or Fewer Placements	65.4%	52.1%	50.7%	48.1%	54.9%	55.2%
Children in Care 24+ Months With 2 or Fewer Placements	41.8%	29.6%	29.3%	29.2%	27.5%	27.7%

PRIORITY OUTCOME: WELL-BEING

PRIORITY OUTCOME: WELL-BEING

Ensuring that children receive appropriate services to meet their educational, physical, and mental health needs, and that families develop the capacity to meet these needs for their children, is a priority for the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services. Many of the initiatives described in other areas of this report support our efforts in ensuring child and family well-being, including Family-Centered Practice, frequent and quality visits with children and families, and comprehensive child and family assessments. In addition, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services offer a range of programs and services to children and families specifically geared towards meeting children's educational, physical, and mental health needs.

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMS

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services work to prepare older foster care youth for independent living via the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). Nebraska's CFCIP includes a Preparation for Adult Living Skills (PALS) Program and a Transitional Living Program (TLP). Both programs offer youth life skills training, housing, educational assistance, vocational training and support, and transportation. In addition, the TLP provides semi-independent living environments for youth who are transitioning to an independent living setting. Staff conducts an Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment with youth participating in both programs to determine each youth's specific needs. Youth develop with their caseworker an individualized independent living plan based on their identified needs.

In FFY2007, 590 youth received services through the PALS Program. That same year, 278 youth resided in the six semi-independent living environments offered through the TLP.

EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VOUCHERS PROGRAM

The federal Educational and Training Vouchers Program provides monetary assistance to current and former foster care youth to help them pay for post secondary education or training expenses. In addition to monetary assistance, youth receive assistance in developing an educational or training plan that fits their unique needs and that will ultimately help them in becoming self-sufficient adults. In FFY2007, 311 youth received educational and training vouchers.

FORMER WARD PROGRAM

The Former Ward Program (FWP) assists former wards of the state in pursuing their educational goals, whether that goal is earning a high school diploma or pursuing additional education or training designed to prepare the youth for gainful employment. The program provides room and board assistance, and in some cases Medicaid coverage, to former wards between the ages of 18 and 21 years. An average of 250 youth received monthly assistance through the FWP in SFY2007. Collectively, these youth received a total of \$594,671 in assistance and \$59,784 in Medicaid coverage throughout the year.



COLLABORATIONS

COLLABORATIONS

The Child Welfare Unit and the Office of Juvenile Services collaborate with partner agencies to ensure adequate services are available and accessible to the children and families we serve throughout the state and that the child welfare system as a whole is responsive to the children and families involved. These collaborative projects span a broad range of areas including investigative processes, court interventions, child and family advocacy, child abuse prevention, and educational services.

CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS

The Department of Health and Human Services administers federal funding and support to eight Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) across the state. These centers are located in Grand Island, Kearney, Lincoln, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, Scotts Bluff, and Valentine. CACs provide coordinated, multidisciplinary services and support to abused children and their non-offending family members in a safe and child-friendly environment. CAC services include conducting forensic interviews and exams with children who have experienced abuse, providing mental health services to abused children, offering medical and legal advocacy and support to children and families, and more. CACs also offer community education and professional training to the public.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS

The Department of Health and Human Services administers federal funding and support to 22 community-based domestic violence and sexual assault programs located throughout the state. The programs offer crisis services, emergency shelter, transportation, medical and legal advocacy and referral, and ongoing support and services to people who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence. Programs offer child-specific services to children who have experienced domestic violence or abuse in the form of children's groups, one-on-one matches or mentoring, and child advocacy. The programs also provide public education and prevention programming in each of their local communities.

NEBRASKA FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION

The Department of Health and Human Services has a long working relationship with the Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (NFAPA). NFAPA provides invaluable information, resources, mentoring, and support to foster and adoptive families across the state. Each year, NFAPA conducts a Resource Parent Summer Conference offering training and education on foster parenting to resources parents. This year, NFAPA conducted additional training for parents on Family-Centered Practice. NFAPA mentors also received training on the new safety intervention system implemented by the Child Welfare Unit in 2007. More recent products of our collaborations with NFAPA include the development of a foster parent conflict resolution process, a foster parent mentoring program, a foster parent disaster plan, and a survey to conduct with foster parents seeking information on their experiences within the child welfare system.



COLLABORATIONS

NEBRASKA ALLIANCE FOR DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN

In 2005, the Attorney General's Office, Nebraska State Patrol, the County Attorney's Association, the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Nebraska Chapter of Child Advocacy Centers collaborated to form the Nebraska Alliance for Drug Endangered Children. The Alliance empowers communities in preventing, protecting, and serving children in drug-endangered environments by providing resources, education, leadership, and support to community members. One of the group's first achievements was the development of the *Nebraska Chem-L Protocol*. This protocol defines best practice for law enforcement personnel, the medical community, Department of Health and Human Service workers, and foster care providers in coordinating efforts on behalf of children exposed to methamphetamine. The Alliance continues to provide professionals with additional resources, support, and training.

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

The Department of Health and Human Services is an active member of the Nebraska Department of Education's Ad Hoc Committee on the Education of Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Placements. This committee includes representatives from public schools, group homes, and detention facilities across the state. The mission of the Committee is to provide guidance and direction to state policymakers and stakeholders in the development and implementation of educational opportunities for children and youth in out-of-home placements. The Committee works to promote effective communication, coordination, and collaboration between the key systems involved in the education of children placed out of home, and to promote the successful transition of these youth from out-of-home placements into the public school system or other educational programs. The Committee has focused much of its recent work on training of key professionals in this area.

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Nebraska Department of Education established a Special Education Advisory Council in compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act. This Council provides advice and policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in Nebraska. Department of Health and Human Services staff members participate on this committee and bring to the table special education issues pertinent to state wards. Some of the areas in which the Council has focused its work include: improving learning for children with disabilities throughout the state, assessing special educational needs, assisting youth in transitioning into or out of school, and interim program schools located in detention facilities, emergency shelters, group homes, or other facilities not operated by a public school district.



COLLABORATIONS

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES TASK FORCE

In May 2007, the Nebraska Legislature passed Legislative Bill 316. This bill created a Special Education Services Task Force to review the provision and financing of special education services in the state and to provide legislative and policy recommendations based on their review. The Department of Health and Human Services participated on the Task Force and contributed to the development of recommendations, which the Task Force later introduced to the Nebraska Legislature in 2008. Some of the recommendations included enhancing parental involvement in creating individualized educational plans for children and clarifying the payment process when obtaining educational services for children in residential facilities.

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE CAMPAIGN

In 2006, the Department of Health and Human Services collaborated with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation's Prevent Child Abuse Nebraska and the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board to implement a statewide child abuse prevention plan. The plan serves as a guide to legislators, state agencies, community groups, and others in the field as they make decisions, develop policies, and implement programs around the prevention of child abuse. In 2007, the Board began using the plan to focus its annual grant-making process. Funding priorities were placed on the needs and strategies identified in the plan and applicants were asked to address one or more of the needs and strategies in their proposals.

NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT COMMISSION ON CHILDREN IN THE COURTS

The Nebraska Supreme Court established a Commission on Children in the Courts in 2005 to study and recommend appropriate steps for the judicial system to take to ensure that the courts are as responsive as possible for children who are involved with or affected by the courts. Department of Health and Human Services representatives serve as members on various subcommittees of the Commission. The subcommittees' work has led to proposed guidelines and training requirements for guardians ad litem representing children in abuse and neglect cases, guidelines and training for parents in these cases, and the development of the *Caregiver Information Form* for foster parents.

The Commission also oversees a Court Improvement Project aimed at improving how the state court system responds to cases of child abuse or neglect. Project staff are examining the barriers to the system's ability to establish permanency for children and identifying and developing solutions to those barriers. Collaborative workgroups consisting of Child Welfare Unit staff, judges, attorneys, advocates, and other system representatives provide the structure of this project.

NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT'S THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CHILD INITIATIVE

The Nebraska Supreme Court, along with key partners and stakeholders, developed the Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative in 2005 to improve the processing and outcomes of the child abuse/neglect court system in Nebraska. Within this project there are 25 collaborative teams that work within their local court systems, and one overarching state-level structure that assists



COLLABORATIONS

local teams in their efforts and maintains a consistent and productive system of collaboration throughout the state. Local teams consist of a lead judge, a team secretary, and various stakeholders from the child abuse/neglect court system, including attorneys, social workers, guardians ad litem, school representatives, Tribal members, foster parents and former foster youth, and other key stakeholders. The leaders of this initiative are Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Heavican and the Honorable Larry Gendler as Project Chair. Department of Health and Human Services administrators meet regularly with these leaders and Department staff serves as secretaries for some of the local teams. Work on this initiative has resulted in the development of a *County and Juvenile Court Practice Guide*, training for courts on visitation, and the implementation of pre-hearing conferences for families experiencing intervention due to child abuse and neglect.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2007



MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2007

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services have accomplished many achievements in 2007. The following are just a few highlights on the projects towards which we have directed a considerable amount of time, energy, and efforts throughout the year.

NEBRASKA SAFETY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

The Child Welfare Unit, in collaboration with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (a program funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Children's Bureau), developed a new safety intervention system to use in response to reports of child abuse and neglect. We began implementing the new safety intervention system in the western area of the state in spring 2007 and continued across the state through spring 2008.

The Nebraska Safety Intervention System (NSIS) increases focus on the safety of all children in a home using a structured, in-depth information gathering and decision-making process. Although determining whether a specific incident of child maltreatment occurred is important in assessing the overall safety of the child, this determination is only one part of the holistic assessment process. Caseworkers also gather information about child functioning, discipline, general parenting practices, and adult functioning to determine which families need services and what type of services would be most beneficial for families.

Some families may have a need for services, but their children are safe. In these cases, workers will refer families to community services and encourage families to develop informal community and family supports. In cases involving families whose children are unsafe, caseworkers offer families ongoing services designed to decrease existing threats to child safety and enhance parents' capacity to keep their children safe. Additionally, caseworkers assist families in obtaining informal supports and services that offer behavioral, change-based interventions, rather than compliance-based case planning.

In keeping with the Department of Health and Human Services' philosophy of providing the least intrusive and least restrictive intervention to families whenever possible, caseworkers select in-home services for families whose children can remain safely in the home. Caseworkers engage families in the assessment process throughout the families' involvement with the Child Welfare Unit and at important decision points in the case to continually monitor child safety.

In summary, the NSIS moves our safety interventions from an incident-based safety response to a more comprehensive evaluation of safety. It truly demonstrates a family-centered approach to this work in that it allows for increased opportunity to provide service intervention in the home, and with the active involvement of families and other informal and community supports. Ultimately, the NSIS helps create a home environment in which the child and family can live safely and it assists the family in developing self sufficiency to maintain and sustain this safe environment.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2007

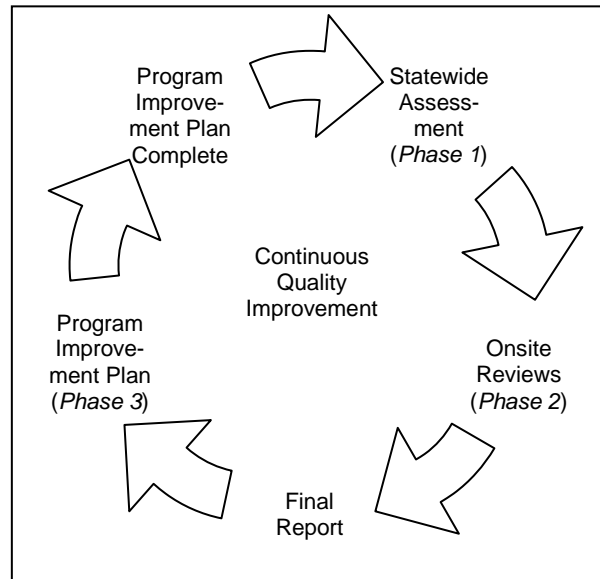
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

Over the last year, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services have also focused much time and effort towards preparing for our upcoming Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The CFSR is a collaborative effort between federal and state governments to monitor each state's child welfare program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Children's Bureau administers the review. The Children's Bureau conducts the CFSR in each state every five years. Nebraska participated in its first review in July 2002, and will participate in its second review in July, 2008.

The purpose of the CFSR is to analyze Nebraska's performance in serving abused, neglected, and delinquent children; to ensure Nebraska's conformity with federal child welfare requirements; to examine the effects of courts and other public agencies on the children and families served by the state's child welfare system; to determine what is happening to children and families engaged in child welfare services in Nebraska; and to enhance Nebraska's capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.

The review involves three phases. In the first phase, a team of key stakeholders from the state conduct an assessment of child welfare services across the state. The team drafts the assessment prior to the onsite reviews to provide reviewers with the background and context of child welfare services in the state. The second phase consists of week-long onsite reviews at three different sites in the state. Review teams consist of state and federal staff members who review a group of randomly selected cases and conduct interviews with the children and families involved in each case, in addition to local stakeholders involved in the child welfare system. The third phase of the review includes the completion of a final report detailing areas of strength and areas needing improvement (drafted by our federal partners), and the development of a program improvement plan (developed jointly by state and federal staff and stakeholders). The implementation of the program improvement plan spans over two years and requires continuous monitoring and reporting to our federal partners.

2. The CFSR Process



In November 2007, the Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services held a CFSR kick-off event to share with stakeholders our successes, challenges, and vision for the future, and to engage stakeholders in the CFSR process. Over 100 stakeholders attended the event, including former foster care youth, foster parents, service providers, court representatives, Tribal leaders, legislators and legislative personnel, our federal partners, and internal caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators. Over 50 stakeholders committed to be involved in the CFSR process by serving as members on

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2007

the statewide assessment team, conducting onsite reviews, participating in interviews, and/or developing the final program improvement plan.

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services conducted additional day-long meetings with stakeholders on the statewide assessment team to obtain information and feedback to include in the statewide assessment report. Team members volunteered to facilitate focus groups with current and former foster care youth, biological parents, foster and adoptive parents, Tribal leaders, and judges throughout the state. Nearly 500 stakeholders, including parents and youth, completed online surveys as well. We incorporated all of this information into our statewide assessment report, which we then shared with stakeholders on the statewide assessment team for their review and revised accordingly.

We are proud of our efforts towards conducting a fully collaborative assessment of child welfare services throughout the state. The inclusion of multiple stakeholders, especially youth and parents, will allow us to more thoroughly examine what is happening to children and families engaged in child welfare services in Nebraska and to enhance the state's capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. We look forward to the upcoming federal CFSR to provide additional insight on child welfare services throughout the state.

CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES MEASURED IN PROTECTION AND SAFETY STATISTICS



In July of 2007, Nebraska introduced the Children's Outcomes Measured in Protection and Safety Statistics (COMPASS) program. COMPASS is a web-based program that displays large amounts of data in a clear and user-friendly format using charts and graphs. The information is available to the public and can be viewed by anyone with Internet access (www.DHHS.ne.gov/compass/).

COMPASS displays the state's performance in all of the federal and state measures and outcomes, many of which were included in this report. The program is interactive, in that it offers users the ability to view data at a number of levels (i.e., by service area, judicial district, city, and county levels).

We are excited about COMPASS, as it has given us the opportunity to share with the public our performance in meeting state and federal outcomes in an accessible format. Sharing this information with the public will also increase the child welfare system's accountability in establishing safety, permanency, and well-being for the children and families we serve.

ANTICIPATED FOCUS FOR 2008

ANTICIPATED FOCUS FOR 2008

The Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services are committed to enhancing and improving the services we provide to children and families. Even with some of our recent achievements, our work is far from complete. We have developed new and exciting plans for 2008 that will allow us to continue to improve our services for children and families.



NEBRASKA SAFETY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Implementation of the Nebraska Safety Intervention System continued into the spring of 2008. Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services staff will continue to receive training on the new model, and Comprehensive Quality Assurance/Operations staff will continue to monitor staffs' adherence to the model via case reviews. We anticipate a reduction in the number of children placed in out-of-home care and the number of children who reenter care with the implementation of this new model as it helps create a home environment in which children and families can live safely and it assists families in developing self sufficiency to maintain a safe environment.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

With the upcoming 2008 Child and Family Services Review, we will be working to complete our comprehensive statewide assessment of child welfare services to share with our state and federal partners, key stakeholders, and the community at large. Staff from the Child Welfare Unit, the Office of Juvenile Services, and Comprehensive Quality Assurance/Operations will be focusing much time and energy towards planning a smooth and accurate onsite review process. Once onsite reviews are completed and we receive the final report from our federal partners, we will develop and implement a program improvement plan with our state and federal partners and stakeholders. Additionally, we will continuously monitor and report quarterly to our federal partners on the progress we make towards our program improvement plan.

SERVICE ARRAY INITIATIVE

The Divisions of Children and Family Services, Behavioral Health, and Medicaid and Long-Term Care are making changes to support the provision of services to children and families involved with the Department of Health and Human Services. Our goal is to provide children and families with the least intrusive, least restrictive services possible. Ultimately, children and families receive services while children remain safely in their home. However, we recognize multiple barriers to keeping children safe in their own homes may exist, including abuse and neglect, the behavioral health needs of parents, parental substance abuse, and other related issues. Thus, we are working to develop a variety of services at multiple levels of intervention to overcome these barriers. In this initiative, each organizational division will contribute to the development of these services. Divisions will shift resources towards more in-home and community-based services and supports, including early intervention and prevention services for families prior to the occurrence of child maltreatment. The efforts and outcomes of this initiative will coincide with those made under the five year Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration State Infrastructure Grant that Nebraska received in 2004. We

ANTICIPATED FOCUS FOR 2008

have also focused our work under this grant on service and infrastructure development throughout the state.

HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

The Division of Children and Family Services received funding in 2005 to establish an early intervention Home Visitation Program for families identified as being at high risk for abuse and neglect. In this program, trained personnel visit families in their home and provide families with a combination of information, support, and training on child health, development, and care. Omaha and Scottsbluff served as the two pilot sites for this program. These programs have been operational for the past two years. In 2007, the Legislature appropriated additional funding to expand the services provided by this program. We will continue expanding these services across the state in 2008.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Children and youth who are state wards may have multiple needs that require services and support from multiple systems, including behavioral health, child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and communities. These systems must work together to provide children and youth with the most effective and comprehensive services possible to meet their needs. For that reason, the Division of Children and Family Services' Child Welfare Unit and Office of Juvenile Services, the Division of Behavioral Health, and the Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care created a plan to collaboratively address the behavioral health needs of children and youth in Nebraska. The divisions submitted the plan to Governor Heineman and the Nebraska Legislature in January 2008.

The *Creating Change and Providing Hope for Nebraska's Children, Adolescents, and Their Families* plan will develop a balanced array of accessible services for children and youth across the state. The plan incorporates services that scientific evidence has shown to be successful in meeting the behavioral health needs of youth and resulting in positive outcomes for youth. We will also be exploring services and facilities for juvenile offenders and addressing the shortage of behavioral health services in rural areas in this plan. These efforts will require an extensive amount of time and effort from staff in all collaborating divisions in the next and following years.

JUVENILE SERVICES PLAN

The Office of Juvenile Services has identified specific areas in which it will focus its efforts in the upcoming year. In 2008, the Office of Juvenile Services will enhance staff training and supervision and "specialize" staff as much as possible. The Office of Juvenile Services will also develop a "levels of supervision" matrix for staff to use to tailor levels of community supervision to match youths' individual needs; it will implement a one-stop juvenile services triage center to deliver evaluation, intervention, and transition services within one facility; and it plans to enhance services and programming for high-risk juvenile offenders committed to the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers. Other plans include a review of policy and practice related to the secure transportation of youth; the development of a new and improved process to enter information into the National Crime Information Center Network; and the revision of Office of Juvenile Services policies.

CALENDAR YEAR 2007 INFORMATION AT A GLANCE

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS

Reports Received: **24,765**
 Reports Accepted for Investigation: **13,319**
 Substantiated Reports: **2,894**

WARDS IN STATE CARE

Total Wards in State Care: **11,217**
 Wards Receiving In-Home Care: **2,440**
 Wards Receiving Out-of-Home Care: **8,777**

TYPES OF SUBSTANTIATED ABUSE

Physical Abuse: **706**
 Emotional Abuse: **169**
 Physical Neglect: **5,486**
 Emotional Neglect: **211**
 Sexual Abuse: **366**

ENTRIES AND EXITS

Entries into Care: **3,510**
 Exits from Care: **3,618**

ADOPTION

Children Free for Adoption: **314**
 Placements in Adoptive Home: **232**
 Finalized Adoptions: **462**

TYPE OF PLACEMENTS

With Parents: **4,339**
 With Relatives: **2,124**
 Foster home: **4,433**
 Group Home: **2,715**
 Facility: **2,628**
 Adoptive Home: **232**
 Independent Living: **278**
 Out of State: **394**

DISCHARGES FROM STATE CARE

Reunification: **3,151**
 Adoption: **462**
 Guardianship: **277**
 Independent Living: **460**
 Other: **135**

FEDERAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES	NATIONAL STANDARD	FFY2007 STATE PERFORMANCE
Absence of Recurrent Maltreatment	94.6%	93.2%
Absence of Maltreatment in Foster Care	99.68%	99.5%
Composite 1. Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification	122.6	111.3
Exits to Reunification Within 12 Months of Recent Entry	75.2%	63.9%
Median Months in Care for Children Exiting to Reunification Within 12 Months of Most Recent Entry*	5.4	8.1
Exits to Reunification Within 12 Months of First Entry	48.4%	44.3%
Reentry into Care for Children Exiting to Reunification*	9.9%	13.5%
Composite 2. Timeliness of Adoption	106.4	95.8
Exits to Adoption Within 24 Months	36.6%	19.5%
Median Months in Care*	27.3	34.3
Children in Care 17+ Months and Adopted Within 12 Months	22.7%	23.2%
Children in Care 17+ Months and Legally Free for Adoption Within 6 Months	10.9%	12.6%
Children Legally Free for Adoption and Adopted Within 12 Months	53.7%	53.2%
Composite 3. Permanency for Children in Foster Care	121.7	151.0
Children in Care 24+ Months and Discharged to a Permanent Home	29.1%	38.7%
Children Legally Free for Adoption and Discharged to a Permanent Home	98.0%	98.1%
Children in Care 3+ Years and Discharged to Independent Living or Turned 18*	37.5%	23.%
Composite 4. Placement Stability for Children in Foster Care	101.5	90.3
Children in Care Less Than 12 Months With 2 or Fewer Placements	86.0%	84.9%
Children in Care 12 to 24 Months With 2 or Fewer Placements	65.4%	55.2%
Children in Care 24+ Months With 2 or Fewer Placements	41.8%	27.7%

* In these measures, a number or percent lower than that of the national standard is desired.

COUNTY DATA

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS BY COUNTY CALENDAR YEAR 2007

County	Total Calls	Abuse/Neglect Calls ¹		Investigated Reports ²		Substantiated Reports ³		Unfounded Reports ³		Unable to Locate ³		In Process of Investigation ²	
Adams	382	337	88.2%	248	73.6%	33	13.3%	203	81.9%	12	4.8%	22	6.5%
Antelope	30	30	100.0%	26	86.7%	6	23.1%	20	76.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Arthur	2	2	100.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Banner	3	3	100.0%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%
Boone	22	22	100.0%	19	86.4%	5	26.3%	13	68.4%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%
Box Butte	145	137	94.5%	121	88.3%	27	22.3%	92	76.0%	2	1.7%	2	1.5%
Boyd	10	10	100.0%	9	90.0%	2	22.2%	7	77.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Brown	38	38	100.0%	32	84.2%	5	15.6%	27	84.4%	0	0.0%	3	7.9%
Buffalo	2,343	1,664	71.0%	451	27.1%	43	9.5%	405	89.8%	3	0.7%	17	1.0%
Burt	34	34	100.0%	29	85.3%	4	13.8%	25	86.2%	0	0.0%	3	8.8%
Butler	77	71	92.2%	44	62.0%	24	54.5%	20	45.5%	0	0.0%	18	25.4%
Cass	208	192	92.3%	168	87.5%	24	14.3%	140	83.3%	4	2.4%	10	5.2%
Cedar	10	10	100.0%	7	70.0%	1	14.3%	6	85.7%	0	0.0%	1	10.0%
Chase	12	12	100.0%	7	58.3%	0	0.0%	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	4	33.3%
Cherry	80	74	92.5%	57	77.0%	11	19.3%	46	80.7%	0	0.0%	4	5.4%
Cheyenne	122	119	97.5%	86	72.3%	10	11.6%	75	87.2%	1	1.2%	29	24.4%
Clay	30	30	100.0%	27	90.0%	3	11.1%	24	88.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Colfax	36	36	100.0%	30	83.3%	6	20.0%	23	76.7%	1	3.3%	4	11.1%
Cuming	35	35	100.0%	28	80.0%	9	32.1%	19	67.9%	0	0.0%	3	8.6%
Custer	129	114	88.4%	94	82.5%	12	12.8%	82	87.2%	0	0.0%	5	4.4%
Dakota	267	245	91.8%	196	80.0%	41	20.9%	149	76.0%	6	3.1%	14	5.7%
Dawes	104	101	97.1%	78	77.2%	15	19.2%	58	74.4%	5	6.4%	13	12.9%
Dawson	221	213	96.4%	121	56.8%	24	19.8%	95	78.5%	2	1.7%	76	35.7%
Deuel	4	4	100.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	3	75.0%
Dixon	18	18	100.0%	17	94.4%	4	23.5%	13	76.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Dodge	344	317	92.2%	231	72.9%	37	16.0%	192	83.1%	2	0.9%	44	13.9%
Douglas	13,336	10,136	76.0%	3,192	31.5%	873	27.3%	2,231	69.9%	88	2.8%	301	3.0%
Dundy	6	6	100.0%	6	100.0%	1	16.7%	5	83.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Fillmore	26	25	96.2%	16	64.0%	4	25.0%	12	75.0%	0	0.0%	5	20.0%
Franklin	19	19	100.0%	14	73.7%	2	14.3%	12	85.7%	0	0.0%	1	5.3%
Frontier	13	13	100.0%	6	46.2%	0	0.0%	6	100.0%	0	0.0%	7	53.8%
Furnas	33	33	100.0%	24	72.7%	3	12.5%	21	87.5%	0	0.0%	6	18.2%
Gage	256	237	92.6%	167	70.5%	34	20.4%	131	78.4%	2	1.2%	19	8.0%
Garden	5	5	100.0%	4	80.0%	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Garfield	8	8	100.0%	6	75.0%	1	16.7%	5	83.3%	0	0.0%	2	25.0%
Gosper	17	17	100.0%	6	35.3%	0	0.0%	6	100.0%	0	0.0%	10	58.8%
Grant	3	3	100.0%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	66.7%
Greeley	12	12	100.0%	7	58.3%	1	14.3%	6	85.7%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%
Hall	737	676	91.7%	501	74.1%	128	25.5%	354	70.7%	19	3.8%	77	11.4%
Hamilton	43	43	100.0%	29	67.4%	2	6.9%	27	93.1%	0	0.0%	9	20.9%
Harlan	13	13	100.0%	12	92.3%	1	8.3%	11	91.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Hayes	4	4	100.0%	3	75.0%	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	25.0%
Hitchcock	16	16	100.0%	10	62.5%	0	0.0%	10	100.0%	0	0.0%	6	37.5%
Holt	115	115	100.0%	106	92.2%	15	14.2%	91	85.8%	0	0.0%	3	2.6%
Hooker	1	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Notes. 1 denotes percent when compared to "Total Calls." 2 denotes percent when compared to "Abuse/Neglect Calls." 3 denotes percent when compared to "Investigated Reports." "Substantiated Reports" indicates reports in which a finding of Court Substantiated, Court Pending, or Inconclusive was made.

COUNTY DATA

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS BY COUNTY CALENDAR YEAR 2007 (CONT.)

County	Total Calls	Abuse/Neglect Calls ¹		Investigated Reports ²		Substantiated Reports ³		Unfounded Reports ³		Unable to Locate ³		In Process of Investigation ²	
Howard	33	33	100.0%	25	75.8%	4	16.0%	21	84.0%	0	0.0%	4	12.1%
Jefferson	82	68	82.9%	44	64.7%	13	29.5%	31	70.5%	0	0.0%	7	10.3%
Johnson	27	27	100.0%	21	77.8%	6	28.6%	15	71.4%	0	0.0%	2	7.4%
Kearney	39	39	100.0%	34	87.2%	4	11.8%	30	88.2%	0	0.0%	2	5.1%
Keith	65	64	98.5%	33	51.6%	4	12.1%	27	81.8%	2	6.1%	26	40.6%
Keya Paha	2	2	100.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Kimball	50	50	100.0%	43	86.0%	6	14.0%	37	86.0%	0	0.0%	4	8.0%
Knox	81	67	82.7%	48	71.6%	10	20.8%	35	72.9%	3	6.3%	7	10.4%
Lancaster	3,939	3,459	87.8%	1,848	53.4%	756	40.9%	1,060	57.4%	32	1.7%	356	10.3%
Lincoln	1,761	1,646	93.5%	495	30.1%	87	17.6%	401	81.0%	7	1.4%	181	11.0%
Logan	6	6	100.0%	2	33.3%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	4	66.7%
Loup	3	3	100.0%	2	66.7%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Madison	1,227	868	70.7%	305	35.1%	45	14.8%	249	81.6%	11	3.6%	48	5.5%
Merrick	40	40	100.0%	31	77.5%	3	9.7%	28	90.3%	0	0.0%	5	12.5%
Morrill	68	66	97.1%	58	87.9%	11	19.0%	46	79.3%	1	1.7%	2	3.0%
Nance	30	30	100.0%	27	90.0%	5	18.5%	21	77.8%	1	3.7%	0	0.0%
Nemaha	22	22	100.0%	19	86.4%	1	5.3%	18	94.7%	0	0.0%	1	4.5%
Nuckolls	20	20	100.0%	18	90.0%	2	11.1%	16	88.9%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%
Otoe	116	97	83.6%	74	76.3%	8	10.8%	66	89.2%	0	0.0%	12	12.4%
Pawnee	13	13	100.0%	9	69.2%	3	33.3%	6	66.7%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%
Perkins	13	13	100.0%	8	61.5%	2	25.0%	6	75.0%	0	0.0%	5	38.5%
Phelps	54	54	100.0%	48	88.9%	5	10.4%	43	89.6%	0	0.0%	3	5.6%
Pierce	80	70	87.5%	54	77.1%	7	13.0%	46	85.2%	1	1.9%	1	1.4%
Platte	341	315	92.4%	236	74.9%	46	19.5%	177	75.0%	13	5.5%	18	5.7%
Polk	12	12	100.0%	6	50.0%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	6	50.0%
Red Willow	157	150	95.5%	113	75.3%	18	15.9%	92	81.4%	3	2.7%	30	20.0%
Richardson	60	55	91.7%	51	92.7%	5	9.8%	45	88.2%	1	2.0%	1	1.8%
Rock	8	8	100.0%	8	100.0%	0	0.0%	8	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Saline	76	71	93.4%	53	74.6%	8	15.1%	45	84.9%	0	0.0%	10	14.1%
Sarpy	821	743	90.5%	586	78.9%	178	30.4%	402	68.6%	6	1.0%	53	7.1%
Saunders	131	129	98.5%	86	66.7%	29	33.7%	57	66.3%	0	0.0%	34	26.4%
Scotts Bluff	763	696	91.2%	523	75.1%	98	18.7%	418	79.9%	7	1.3%	111	15.9%
Seward	104	91	87.5%	52	57.1%	26	50.0%	26	50.0%	0	0.0%	30	33.0%
Sheridan	56	56	100.0%	47	83.9%	5	10.6%	41	87.2%	1	2.1%	6	10.7%
Sherman	18	18	100.0%	12	66.7%	4	33.3%	8	66.7%	0	0.0%	3	16.7%
Sioux	3	3	100.0%	3	100.0%	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Stanton	22	22	100.0%	18	81.8%	1	5.6%	17	94.4%	0	0.0%	2	9.1%
Thayer	27	27	100.0%	21	77.8%	7	33.3%	14	66.7%	0	0.0%	5	18.5%
Thomas	3	3	100.0%	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%
Thurston	102	89	87.3%	35	39.3%	24	68.6%	11	31.4%	0	0.0%	33	37.1%
Valley	27	27	100.0%	22	81.5%	1	4.5%	21	95.5%	0	0.0%	1	3.7%
Washington	79	77	97.5%	66	85.7%	14	21.2%	52	78.8%	0	0.0%	4	5.2%
Wayne	18	18	100.0%	14	77.8%	2	14.3%	11	78.6%	1	7.1%	2	11.1%
Webster	26	26	100.0%	20	76.9%	3	15.0%	17	85.0%	0	0.0%	2	7.7%
York	141	122	86.5%	83	68.0%	22	26.5%	61	73.5%	0	0.0%	24	19.7%
Total	30,135	24,765	82.2%	11,544	46.6%	2,894	25.1%	8,412	72.9%	238	2.1%	1,775	7.2%

Notes. 1 denotes percent when compared to "Total Calls." 2 denotes percent when compared to "Abuse/Neglect Calls." 3 denotes percent when compared to "Investigated Reports." "Substantiated Reports" indicates reports in which a finding of Court Substantiated, Court Pending, or Inconclusive was made.

COUNTY DATA

CHILDREN IN THE STATE'S LEGAL CUSTODY BY COUNTY CALENDAR YEAR 2007

County	Total State Wards	Child Welfare Unit Wards	Office of Juvenile Services Wards	Multiple Adjudication Types
Adams	215	149	59	7
Antelope	17	12	4	1
Boone	6	2	4	0
Box Butte	39	22	16	1
Boyd	7	7	0	0
Brown	3	2	0	1
Buffalo	203	135	58	10
Burt	20	13	7	0
Butler	65	58	7	0
Cass	125	110	14	1
Cedar	10	10	0	0
Chase	14	12	2	0
Cherry	20	18	0	2
Cheyenne	64	53	4	7
Clay	19	13	4	2
Colfax	44	35	8	1
Cuming	29	23	5	1
Custer	59	40	18	1
Dakota	141	65	73	3
Dawes	32	11	20	1
Dawson	187	142	33	12
Deuel	7	5	2	0
Dixon	26	16	8	2
Dodge	251	192	52	7
Douglas	3,557	2,892	591	74
Dundy	5	5	0	0
Fillmore	46	41	2	3
Franklin	13	12	1	0
Frontier	8	7	1	0
Furnas	34	28	4	2
Gage	106	75	23	8
Garden	9	7	2	0
Garfield	5	3	2	0
Gosper	9	6	2	1
Grant	1	0	1	0
Greeley	15	15	0	0
Hall	417	311	97	9
Hamilton	32	21	10	1
Harlan	5	3	1	1
Hayes	3	3	0	0
Hitchcock	9	7	2	0
Holt	24	20	4	0
Hooker	1	1	0	0
Howard	22	18	4	0
Jefferson	59	35	24	0
Johnson	21	18	3	0
Kearney	18	15	3	0
Keith	43	39	3	1
Kimball	30	26	3	1

COUNTY DATA

CHILDREN IN THE STATE'S LEGAL CUSTODY BY COUNTY CALENDAR YEAR 2007 (CONT.)

County	Total State Wards	Child Welfare Unit Wards	Office of Juvenile Services Wards	Multiple Adjudication Types
Knox	6	5	0	1
Lancaster	2,244	1,678	526	40
Lincoln	468	383	54	31
Logan	1	0	1	0
Madison	224	132	83	9
Merrick	30	20	9	1
Morrill	29	18	9	2
Nance	14	10	4	0
Nemaha	21	20	1	0
Nuckolls	7	7	0	0
Otoe	50	37	12	1
Pawnee	11	8	3	0
Perkins	4	4	0	0
Phelps	68	49	15	4
Pierce	32	29	3	0
Platte	140	92	43	5
Polk	16	14	2	0
Red Willow	87	64	18	5
Richardson	28	21	7	0
Rock	1	1	0	0
Saline	54	32	14	8
Sarpy	637	552	69	16
Saunders	69	56	12	1
Scotts Bluff	374	312	50	12
Seward	94	71	21	2
Sheridan	22	6	11	5
Sherman	12	10	2	0
Stanton	14	9	5	0
Thayer	20	8	12	0
Thomas	3	3	0	0
Thurston	128	66	6	56
Valley	17	15	2	0
Washington	57	39	17	1
Wayne	14	11	3	0
Webster	13	13	0	0
York	101	74	25	2
Out of State	12	11	1	0
Total	11,217	8,633	2,221	363

COUNTY DATA

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN THE STATE'S LEGAL CUSTODY BY COUNTY DECEMBER 31, 2007

County	Adoptive Home	Relative Home	Foster Home	Group Home	Residential Facility	Independent Living	Runaway	Parent(s)	Total
Adams	1 0.6%	16 10.4%	57 37.0%	5 3.2%	17 11.0%	4 2.6%	0 0.0%	54 35.1%	154 100.0%
Antelope	1 10.0%	1 10.0%	4 40.0%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 10.0%	10 100.0%
Boone	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 100.0%
Box Butte	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 33.3%	1 8.3%	2 16.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 41.7%	12 100.0%
Boyd	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 80.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	5 100.0%
Brown	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 100.0%
Buffalo	0 0.0%	24 18.9%	39 30.7%	10 7.9%	14 11.0%	3 2.4%	0 0.0%	37 29.1%	127 100.0%
Burt	2 18.2%	0 0.0%	5 45.5%	1 9.1%	1 9.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 18.2%	11 100.0%
Butler	0 0.0%	7 17.5%	20 50.0%	2 5.0%	3 7.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	8 20.0%	40 100.0%
Cass	0 0.0%	14 21.5%	17 26.2%	9 13.8%	8 12.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	17 26.2%	65 100.0%
Cedar	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 66.7%	6 100.0%
Chase	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 70.0%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 20.0%	10 100.0%
Cherry	3 25.0%	3 25.0%	2 16.7%	1 8.3%	2 16.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 8.3%	12 100.0%
Cheyenne	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 13.8%	4 13.8%	6 20.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	15 51.7%	29 100.0%
Clay	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 38.5%	1 7.7%	4 30.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 23.1%	13 100.0%
Colfax	0 0.0%	6 23.1%	9 34.6%	1 3.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 3.8%	9 34.6%	26 100.0%
Cuming	0 0.0%	7 31.8%	8 36.4%	1 4.5%	1 4.5%	1 4.5%	0 0.0%	4 18.2%	22 100.0%
Custer	0 0.0%	8 24.2%	6 18.2%	2 6.1%	2 6.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	15 45.5%	33 100.0%
Dakota	1 1.2%	6 7.4%	19 23.5%	4 4.9%	13 16.0%	1 1.2%	6 7.4%	31 38.3%	81 100.0%
Dawes	0 0.0%	2 12.5%	2 12.5%	3 18.8%	4 25.0%	1 6.3%	0 0.0%	4 25.0%	16 100.0%
Dawson	0 0.0%	14 16.1%	10 11.5%	14 16.1%	12 13.8%	0 0.0%	1 1.1%	36 41.4%	87 100.0%
Deuel	0 0.0%	2 50.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 100.0%
Dixon	2 13.3%	0 0.0%	2 13.3%	3 20.0%	2 13.3%	1 6.7%	0 0.0%	5 33.3%	15 100.0%
Dodge	3 2.3%	19 14.6%	42 32.3%	11 8.5%	12 9.2%	2 1.5%	0 0.0%	41 31.5%	130 100.0%
Douglas	15 0.7%	334 14.7%	864 38.1%	199 8.8%	211 9.3%	12 0.5%	70 3.1%	560 24.7%	2,265 100.0%

COUNTY DATA

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN THE STATE'S LEGAL CUSTODY BY COUNTY DECEMBER 31, 2007 (CONT.)

County	Adoptive Home	Relative Home	Foster Home	Group Home	Residential Facility	Independent Living	Runaway	Parent(s)	Total
Dundy	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 100.0%
Fillmore	1 3.8%	3 11.5%	8 30.8%	4 15.4%	2 7.7%	1 3.8%	1 3.8%	6 23.1%	26 100.0%
Franklin	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 66.7%	3 100.0%
Frontier	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	3 50.0%	6 100.0%
Furnas	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	9 36.0%	4 16.0%	1 4.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	11 44.0%	25 100.0%
Gage	3 4.7%	13 20.3%	12 18.8%	4 6.3%	7 10.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	25 39.1%	64 100.0%
Garden	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 85.7%	0 0.0%	1 14.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 100.0%
Garfield	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 50.0%	4 100.0%
Gosper	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	6 100.0%
Greeley	0 0.0%	6 54.5%	5 45.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	11 100.0%
Hall	2 0.8%	42 16.2%	95 36.7%	21 8.1%	18 6.9%	3 1.2%	4 1.5%	74 28.6%	259 100.0%
Hamilton	0 0.0%	2 8.3%	8 33.3%	4 16.7%	1 4.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	9 37.5%	24 100.0%
Harlan	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 50.0%	4 100.0%
Hayes	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	2 66.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 100.0%
Hitchcock	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 66.7%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 100.0%
Holt	1 7.7%	0 0.0%	6 46.2%	0 0.0%	3 23.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 23.1%	13 100.0%
Hooker	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%
Howard	0 0.0%	2 12.5%	4 25.0%	1 6.3%	2 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 43.8%	16 100.0%
Jefferson	1 3.6%	2 7.1%	8 28.6%	0 0.0%	2 7.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	15 53.6%	28 100.0%
Johnson	0 0.0%	1 8.3%	9 75.0%	0 0.0%	1 8.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 8.3%	12 100.0%
Kearney	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 14.3%	0 0.0%	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	0 0.0%	9 64.3%	14 100.0%
Keith	0 0.0%	1 3.6%	11 39.3%	7 25.0%	1 3.6%	1 3.6%	0 0.0%	7 25.0%	28 100.0%
Kimball	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 71.4%	2 14.3%	1 7.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 7.1%	14 100.0%
Knox	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	4 100.0%
Lancaster	17 1.1%	233 15.3%	444 29.1%	130 8.5%	152 10.0%	16 1.0%	15 1.0%	518 34.0%	1,525 100.0%
Lincoln	1 0.3%	39 12.5%	81 26.0%	50 16.0%	23 7.4%	7 2.2%	2 0.6%	109 34.9%	312 100.0%

COUNTY DATA

PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN THE STATE'S LEGAL CUSTODY BY COUNTY DECEMBER 31, 2007 (CONT.)

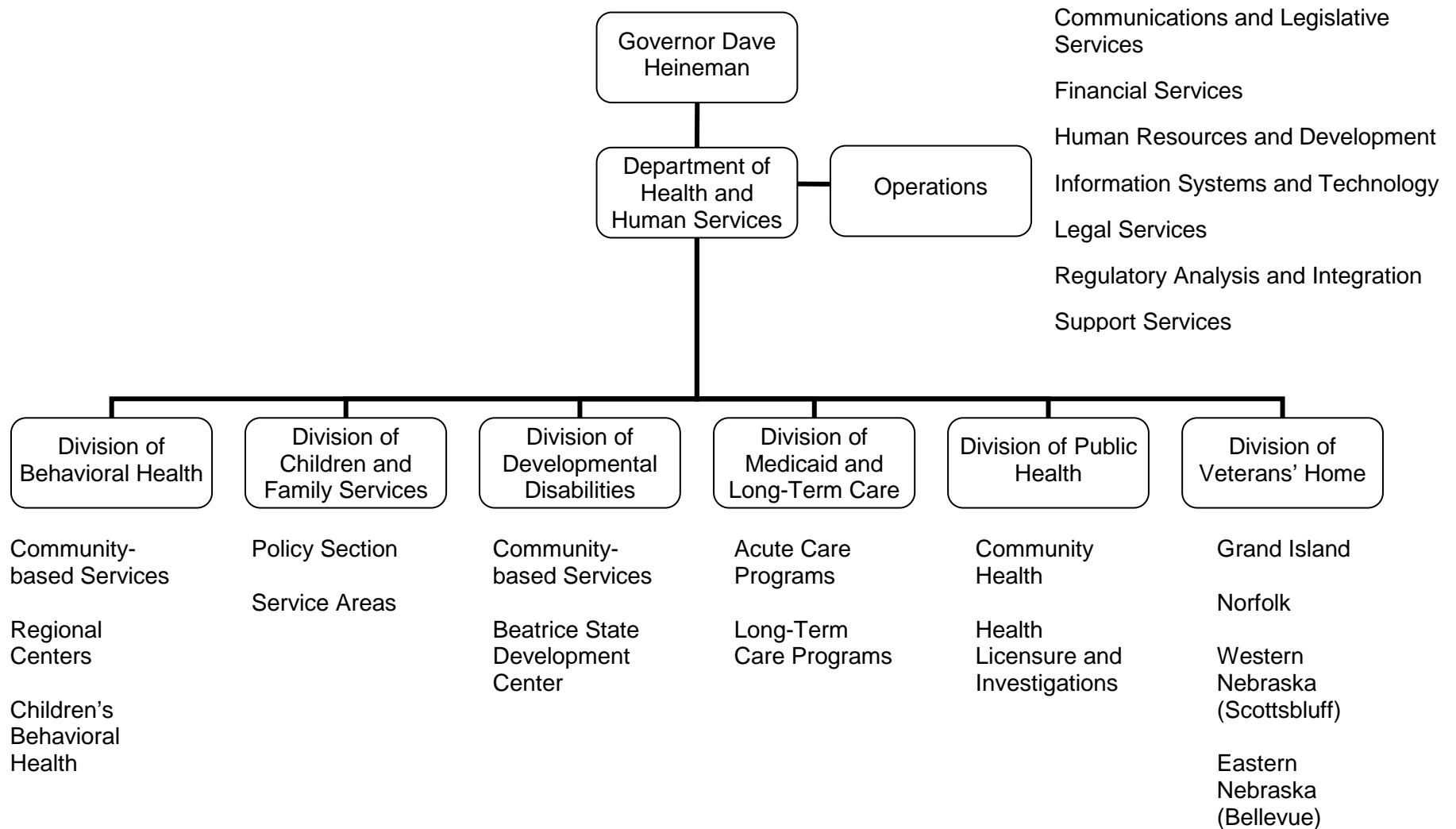
County	Adoptive Home	Relative Home	Foster Home	Group Home	Residential Facility	Independent Living	Runaway	Parent(s)	Total
Logan	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%
Madison	7 5.9%	18 15.1%	34 28.6%	10 8.4%	15 12.6%	1 0.8%	0 0.0%	34 28.6%	119 100.0%
Merrick	0 0.0%	4 20.0%	4 20.0%	1 5.0%	5 25.0%	1 5.0%	0 0.0%	5 25.0%	20 100.0%
Morrill	0 0.0%	1 7.1%	8 57.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 35.7%	14 100.0%
Nance	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 33.3%	0 0.0%	4 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 33.3%	12 100.0%
Nemaha	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 50.0%	0 0.0%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 37.5%	8 100.0%
Nuckolls	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 28.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 71.4%	7 100.0%
Otoe	0 0.0%	3 10.3%	3 10.3%	2 6.9%	1 3.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20 69.0%	29 100.0%
Pawnee	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	4 100.0%
Perkins	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	4 100.0%
Phelps	0 0.0%	9 22.0%	10 24.4%	2 4.9%	2 4.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	18 43.9%	41 100.0%
Pierce	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 25.0%	0 0.0%	3 37.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 37.5%	8 100.0%
Platte	3 3.8%	12 15.2%	26 32.9%	7 8.9%	10 12.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	21 26.6%	79 100.0%
Polk	1 7.1%	0 0.0%	7 50.0%	0 0.0%	1 7.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 35.7%	14 100.0%
Red Willow	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	17 35.4%	7 14.6%	3 6.3%	1 2.1%	0 0.0%	20 41.7%	48 100.0%
Richardson	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 30.0%	3 30.0%	0 0.0%	1 10.0%	3 30.0%	10 100.0%
Saline	2 6.1%	4 12.1%	11 33.3%	2 6.1%	5 15.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	9 27.3%	33 100.0%
Sarpy	2 0.6%	51 14.6%	76 21.7%	30 8.6%	36 10.3%	0 0.0%	5 1.4%	150 42.9%	350 100.0%
Saunders	0 0.0%	5 13.5%	17 45.9%	1 2.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 2.7%	13 35.1%	37 100.0%
Scotts Bluff	3 1.3%	59 24.9%	86 36.3%	9 3.8%	36 15.2%	1 0.4%	3 1.3%	40 16.9%	237 100.0%
Seward	0 0.0%	4 6.8%	18 30.5%	5 8.5%	4 6.8%	1 1.7%	0 0.0%	27 45.8%	59 100.0%
Sheridan	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 16.7%	5 41.7%	2 16.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 25.0%	12 100.0%
Sherman	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 58.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 8.3%	0 0.0%	4 33.3%	12 100.0%
Stanton	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 75.0%	4 100.0%
Thayer	0 0.0%	2 15.4%	3 23.1%	0 0.0%	3 23.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 38.5%	13 100.0%

COUNTY DATA

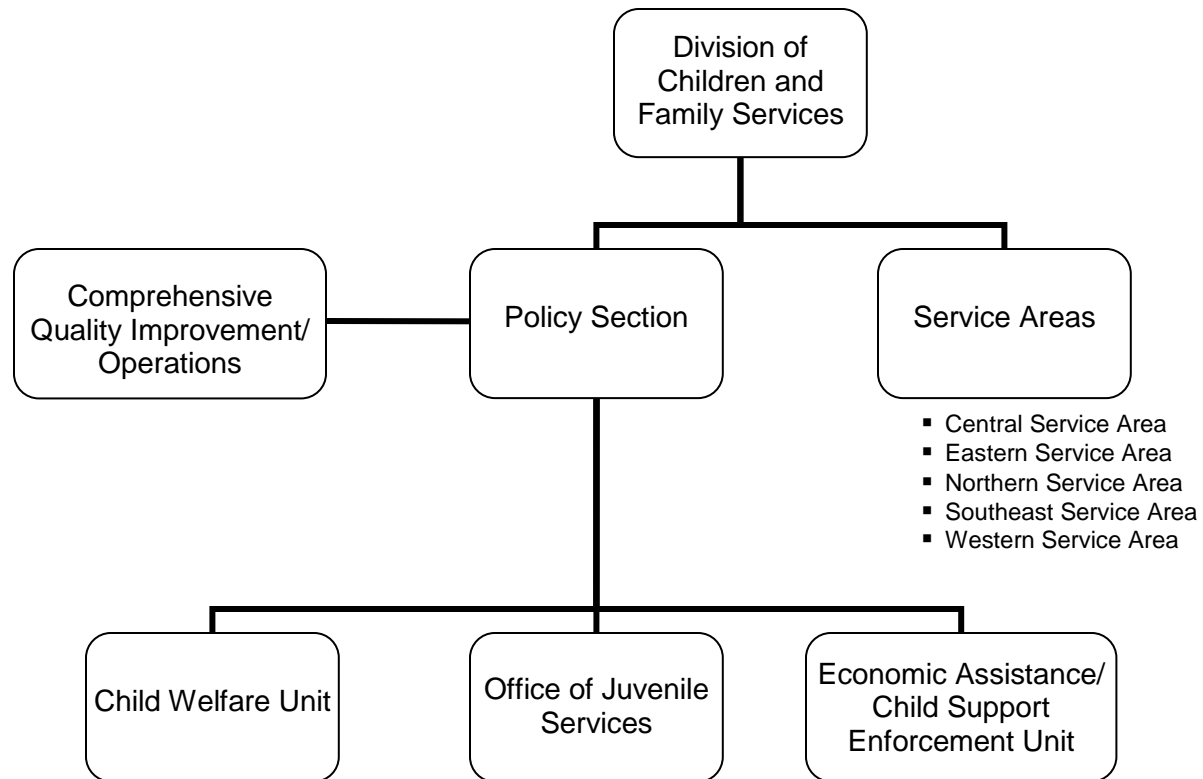
PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN THE STATE'S LEGAL CUSTODY BY COUNTY DECEMBER 31, 2007 (CONT.)

County	Adoptive Home	Relative Home	Foster Home	Group Home	Residential Facility	Independent Living	Runaway	Parent(s)	Total
Thurston	1 1.2%	19 22.4%	13 15.3%	14 16.5%	5 5.9%	0 0.0%	2 2.4%	31 36.5%	85 100.0%
Valley	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 58.3%	1 8.3%	2 16.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 16.7%	12 100.0%
Washington	0 0.0%	5 14.3%	7 20.0%	5 14.3%	5 14.3%	0 0.0%	1 2.9%	12 34.3%	35 100.0%
Wayne	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 66.7%	6 100.0%
Webster	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	8 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	8 100.0%
York	2 3.3%	12 20.0%	14 23.3%	6 10.0%	8 13.3%	1 1.7%	1 1.7%	16 26.7%	60 100.0%
Out of State	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 62.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 12.5%	2 25.0%	8 100.0%
Total	75 1.1%	1,018 14.6%	2,259 32.3%	622 8.9%	700 10.0%	62 0.9%	116 1.7%	2,131 30.5%	6,983 100.0%

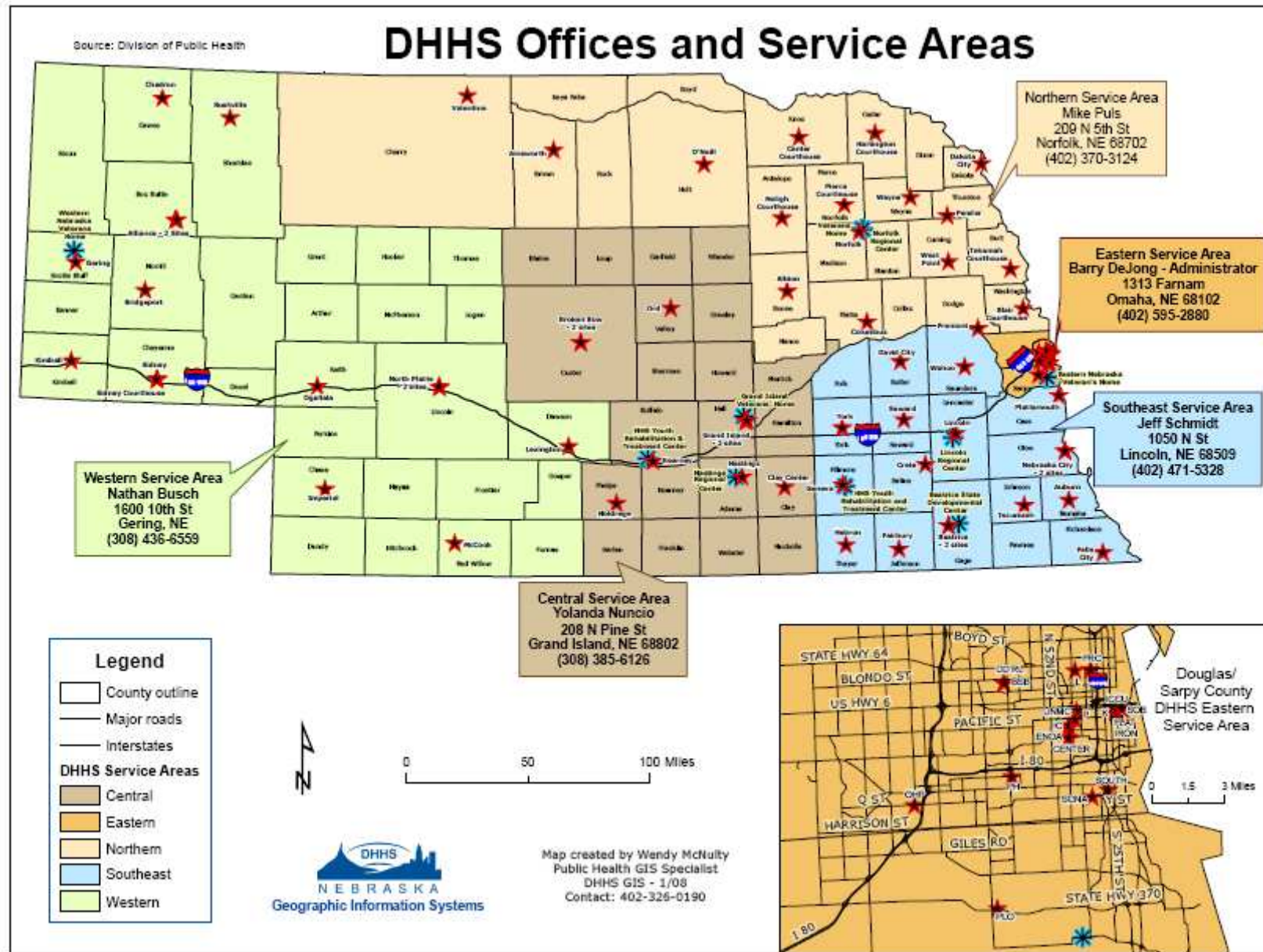
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' SERVICE AREAS



CREDITS FOR THIS REPORT

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